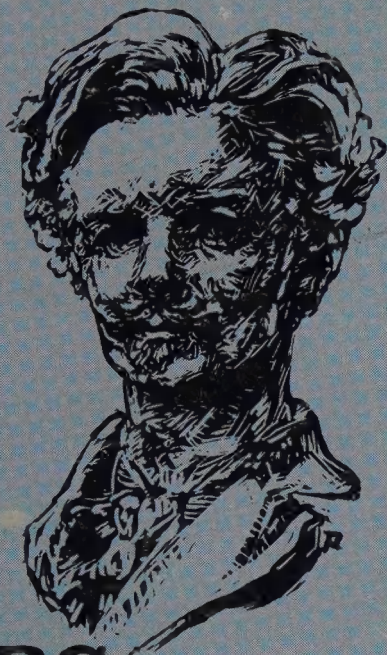


THREE PLAYS



by

AUGUST STRINDBERG

COUNTESS JULIE

THE OUTLAW

THE STRONGER

Palmyra

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THE OUTLAW
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Translated By
EDITH and WARNER OLAND



BOSTON

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

"I tell you, you must have chaos in you,
if you would give birth to a dancing star."

—*Nietzsche*

The "dancing stars" sprung from the chaos of Strindberg's being are shining now with ever-increasing brilliance in the firmament of dramatic literature.

The lack of harmony in his nature which motivated his unusual conduct and temperament, Strindberg tried to explain as due to heredity. His father's family were titled aristocrats, many of them churchmen, although his father followed a commercial career. His mother, the daughter of a poor tailor, was a hotel waitress when his father met her and he only married her after she had borne him three children.

August was the fourth child, born in Stockholm, January 22, 1849, soon after his father had gone into bankruptcy. There was little light or cheer in the boy's home. His mother became nervous and worn with the birth of

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twelve children, and his father was serious and reserved.

In his thirteenth year his mother died, and within a year his father married his housekeeper—a blow to the boy, who never got along with his stepmother.

At school he suffered from the ridicule of wealthier boys, who laughed at his leather breeches and heavy boots, but he became a leader among the boys of lower class. Later, as the family fortunes bettered, he was able to attend a private school, where he came in contact with more culture. He was far from precocious in his studies, though not dull.

He went to Upsala University for one term, and then left, partly on account of lack of funds for books, and partly because of his impatience with the slow, pedantic teaching methods. He taught school for a while, then studied medicine, but was repelled by the suffering he encountered there.

About this time the creative artist in him began to stir, and he made his debut at the Dramatiska Theatre in Stockholm, in 1869, as an actor in Björnson's *Mary Stuart*. After two months in minor roles, he asked the director to hear him in a classical role he had been studying. He shouted and ranted until the director advised him to go to a dramatic school and study. Overcome by humiliation, he went home and swallowed an opium pill. Fortunately it

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was not powerful enough, and a friend coming in persuaded him to go with him to a café and there drown his sorrows.

This was the turning point of his career. Next day, while trying to figure out some way of persuading his stepmother to bring about a reconciliation with his father, he visualized the scene, played as clearly as on a stage, and in two hours had two acts of a comedy worked out. In four days he had finished his first play, and although it was not accepted, the compliments he received restored his confidence.

Within two months he had written two comedies and a tragedy in verse, *Hermione*, which was later produced. He returned to Upsala in 1870, for he was advised that he would never be recognized as a writer without a university degree. To meet his expenses he forced his father to give him the two hundred crowns left him by his mother, but even with this his fortunes were often at a low ebb.

One evening Strindberg read a new one-act play, *In Rome*, to his "Runa" (Song) Club, a group he had got together to read the poetry of its members. It was received enthusiastically, and one of his friends sent the manuscript to the Dramatiska Theatre, where it was accepted and produced anonymously in August, 1870. Strindberg was present at the première, but fled before the final curtain, ashamed of his self-confession.

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He soon finished another play, *The Outlaw*, which is included in the present volume. In this drama, which still holds a high place among his plays, Strindberg began to speak with his own voice. It was accepted by the Court Theatre at Stockholm, for production the next autumn, in 1871.

Returning to the University after a violent quarrel with his father, he found he had only one crown, and most of his old, more prosperous friends were gone. But hope came with the news of the successful production of *The Outlaw*. Then the King, Carl XV, after seeing this splendid viking piece, summoned Strindberg to appear before him. At first Strindberg thought it a practical joke, and only after confirming it by telegraph did he obey the summons.

The kindly old King spoke of the pleasure the ancient viking spirit of *The Outlaw* had given him, and said, "You are the son of Strindberg, the steamship agent, I believe, and so, of course, are not in need."

"Quite the reverse," Strindberg replied, explaining that his father no longer gave him the meager help toward his university course which he had formerly done.

"I'm rather short of cash myself," said the King quite frankly, "but do you think you could manage on eight hundred *riksdaler* a year?"

Strindberg was overwhelmed by such munificence, and the interview ended with his intro-

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duction to the court treasurer, from whom he received his first quarter's allowance of two hundred crowns.

Strindberg took up his studies with more earnestness than ever. The year 1871 closed brilliantly for the young writer. In addition to the kingly favor, he received honorable mention from the Swedish Academy for his Greek drama, *Hermione*.

But following a dispute with one of his professors, and the withdrawal of his stipend after the death of the King, he decided to leave the University for good. At a farewell banquet in his honor he expressed appreciation for all he had received from his student friends, saying, "A personality does not develop from itself, but out of each soul it comes in contact with it sucks a drop, just as the bee gathers the honey from a million flowers, giving it forth eventually in its own."

Strindberg went to Stockholm, where for a few months he gleaned a living from newspaper work; but in the summer he went to a remote island in Bothnia Bay, where in his twenty-third year he wrote his great historical drama, *Master Olof*. But the theatrical managers, objecting to his realistic handling of near-sacred historical personages, refused it, and *Master Olof* was not produced until seven years later, at the Swedish Theatre at Stockholm.

In 1874 he became assistant at the Court

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Library, a position providing both leisure for study and an assured income. Finding in the library some Chinese parchments, he plunged into the study of that language. A treatise on the subject won him medals from various learned societies, as well as from the French Institute; and further treatises brought him other honors, until he was, to use his own phrase, in a condition of "salubrious idiocy."

It was at this time that a friend introduced him to the beautiful Baroness Wrangel, and from that moment he was not a free man. The friendship that followed resulted in the divorce of the Baroness from her husband and her marriage to Strindberg in December, 1877, when he was twenty-eight. His new happiness revived the creative impulse.

In 1878 *Master Olof* was finally accepted and won immediate applause. But his resentment at his belated success led to a satire in novel form, *The Red Room*, which took for a motto Voltaire's words, "Rien est si désagréable que d'être pendu obscurément."

To escape the hostile atmosphere of Sweden, he went to a little village in France, where he joined an international group of painters and writers. An historical work, *La France*, won the decoration of the Legion of Honor, which, however, he refused, explaining that he never had a frock coat!

In 1884 the first volume of his famous short

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stories, *Marriages*, appeared, and the first edition was sold out in a few days. The book's frank discussion of physical sex led to its confiscation by the Swedish Government, but Strindberg won his case for it in court, and the book was again on the market.

The next year, 1885, his *Real Utopias*, an attack on over-civilization, was written, and following its success he went to Italy as a special correspondent for the *Stockholm Daily News*.

When, in 1886, the much anticipated second volume of *Marriages* appeared, it attracted the attention of Nietzsche, and a correspondence sprang up, of which Nietzsche wrote, "Strindberg has written to me, and for the first time I sense an answering note of universality." The charge made by some critics that Nietzsche exerted a dominating influence over Strindberg is disproved by the fact that *Countess Julie* and *The Father*, which are cited as examples of that supposed influence, were completed before Strindberg's acquaintance with Nietzsche's philosophy.

The period during which Strindberg attained his highest peak was in the years 1886-1890, when he wrote his autobiography, *The Servant Woman's Son*; the tragedies, *The Father* and *Countess Julie*; the comedies, *Comrades* and *The Stronger*; and the tragi-comedies, *The Creditor* and *Simoon*. Strindberg's name now

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was known and honored throughout Europe—except in his home country.

Of *Countess Julie* he says, “When I took this motive from life, as it was related to me a few years ago, it made a strong impression on me. I found it suitable for tragedy, and it still makes a sorrowful impression on me to see an individual to whom happiness has been allotted go under; much more, to see a line become extinct.”

He says further, “The theatre has for a long time seemed to me the *biblia pauperum* in the fine arts, a bible with pictures for those who can neither read nor write, and the dramatist is the revivalist who dishes up the ideas of the day in popular form, so popular that the middle class, of whom the bulk of theatre-goers is comprised, can without burdening their brains understand what it is all about. The theatre, therefore, has always been a grammar school for the young, the half-educated, and women, who still possess the primitive power of being able to delude themselves and of allowing themselves to be deluded, that is to say, receive illusions and accept suggestions from the dramatist. . . . People call authoritatively for the ‘Joy of Life,’ and theatrical managers call for farces, as though the Joy of Life lay in being foolish and in describing people who each and every one are suffering from St. Vitus’ dance or idiocy. I find the joy of life in the powerful,

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terrible struggles of life; and the capability of experiencing something, of learning something, is a pleasure to me. And therefore I have chosen an unusual but instructive subject; in other words, an exception, but a great exception, that will strengthen the rules which offend the apostle of the commonplace. What will further create antipathy in some is the fact that my plan of action is not simple, and that there is not one view alone to be taken of it. An event in life—and that is rather a new discovery—is usually occasioned by a series of more or less deep-seated motifs, but the spectator generally chooses that one which his power of judgment finds simplest to grasp, or that his gift of judgment considers the most honorable. For example, someone commits suicide: ‘Bad business!’ says the citizen; ‘Unhappy love!’ says the woman; ‘Sickness!’ says the sick man; ‘Disappointed hopes!’ the bankrupt. But it may be that none of these reasons is the real one, and that the dead man hid the real one by pretending another that would throw the most favorable light on his memory. . . . In the following drama (*Julie*) I have not sought to do anything new, because that cannot be done, but only to modernize the form according to the requirements I have considered present-day people require.”

Following the mighty output of those years, in 1891 Strindberg went to the islands where

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he had lived years before and led a hermit's life, writing and painting. In 1892 he was divorced from his wife.

After a few months, Strindberg went to Berlin, where he was received with honors, including a poem by Richard Dehmel addressed to him as "An Immortal—To Germany's Guest." While in Berlin he heard of the commotion during the production in Paris by Antoine of *Countess Julie*. Also he met a young Austrian writer, Frida Uhl, to whom he was married in April, 1893. Although the literary giant of the hour, he was in very straightened circumstances, which led to his permitting the publication in French of *A Fool's Confession*, an account of his marital miseries, which was republished without his knowledge in Swedish, involving him in a lawsuit.

About this time he became interested in Swedenborg and in chemistry, and went to Paris to pursue chemical research. Here he found his plays meeting with great success. *The Creditor* had been produced, and he was induced to undertake the direction of *The Father* at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre, where it was a tremendous success. At the same time the Cercle des Escholiers put on *The Link*, the Odéon produced *The Secret of the Guild*, and the Chat Noir, *The Keys of Heaven*, while translations of his novels were running in French periodicals.

But Strindberg turned his back on all this

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success and shut himself up in his chemistry laboratory. Between his experiments and his investigations of Swedenborg he was unfit for any kind of companionship, so that when his wife left him to go to their child, who was ill, he welcomed the complete freedom. A year later they were divorced.

In 1896 Strindberg returned to Sweden, so broken in health that he went into the sanatorium of his friend, Dr. Eliasson at Ystad. After two months he was well enough to go to Austria to see his child. Then back in Sweden, at the University of Lund, he immersed himself again in the study of Swedenborg. Here he wrote *The Inferno*, a record of a soul's nightmare that is probably unique in literature. This was followed by the great historical dramas and the realistically symbolical plays of Swedenborgian spirit.

Easter, the most popular of these, was produced in Stockholm, and in 1901 the young Norwegian actress, Harriet Bosse, who had played the part of Eleonora, the psychic, became Strindberg's wife. This third marriage ended in divorce three years later.

In 1906 the actor-manager, August Falk, produced *Countess Julie* in Stockholm, seventeen years after it had been written. In consequence of its success, an intimate theater was founded for the exclusive production of Strindberg's plays.

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On May 14, 1912, worn by the emotional intensity of a life into which had been crowded the stress and storm of a universe, but secure in his position as Sweden's foremost man of letters in modern times, Strindberg closed his more than thirty years of penetrating analysis of the human scene. In his last hours he had said, "One gets more and more humble the longer one lives, and in the shadow of death many things look different."

COUNTESS JULIE

CHARACTERS

COUNTESS JULIE, twenty-five years old

JEAN, ■ valet, thirty

KRISTIN, ■ cook, thirty-five

FARM SERVANTS

The action takes place on Saint John's night, the mid-summer festival surviving from pagan times.

COUNTESS JULIE

SCENE.—*A large kitchen. The ceiling and walls are partially covered by draperies and greens. The back wall slants upward from left side of scene. On back wall, left, are two shelves filled with copper kettles, iron casseroles and tin pans. The shelves are trimmed with fancy scalloped paper. To right of middle a large arched entrance with glass doors through which one sees a fountain with a statue of Cupid, syringa bushes in bloom and tall poplars. To left corner of scene a large stove with hood decorated with birch branches. To right, servants' dining table of white pine and a few chairs. On the end of table stands a Japanese jar filled with syringa blossoms. The floor is strewn with juniper branches.*

Near stove, an ice-box, sink and dish-table. A large old-fashioned bell hangs over the door, to left of door a speaking tube.

Kristin stands at stove engaged in cooking something. She wears a light cotton dress and kitchen apron. Jean comes in wearing livery; he carries a large pair of riding-boots with spurs, which he puts on floor.

JEAN. Tonight Miss Julie is crazy again, perfectly crazy.

KRISTIN. So—you're back at last.

JEAN. I went to the station with the Count and coming back I went in to the barn and danced and then I discovered Miss Julie there leading the dance with the gamekeeper. When she spied me, she rushed right toward me and asked me to waltz, and then she waltzed so—never in my life have I seen anything like it! Ah—she is crazy tonight.

KRISTIN. She has always been. But never so much so in the last fortnight, since her engagement was broken off.

JEAN. Yes, what about that gossip? He seemed like a fine fellow although he wasn't rich! Ach! they have so much nonsense about them. [*Sits himself at table.*] It's queer about Miss Julie though—to prefer staying here at home among these people, eh, to going away with her father to visit her relatives, eh?

KRISTIN. She's probably shamefaced about breaking off with her intended.

JEAN. No doubt! but he was a likely sort just the same. Do you know, Kristin, how it happened? I saw it, although I didn't let on.

KRISTIN. No—did you see it?

JEAN. Yes, indeed, I did. They were out in the stable yard one evening and she was "training" him as she called it. Do you know what happened? She made him leap over her riding whip, the way you teach a dog to

jump. He jumped it twice and got a lash each time; but the third time he snatched the whip from her hand and broke it into pieces. And then he vanished!

KRISTIN. Was that the way it happened? No, you don't say so!

JEAN. Yes, that's the way the thing happened. But what have you got to give me that's good, Kristin?

KRISTIN. [*She takes things from the pans on stove and serves them to him.*] Oh, it's only a bit of kidney that I cut out of the veal steak for you.

JEAN [*Smelling the food*]. Splendid! My favorite delicacy. [*Feeling of plate*]. But you might have warmed the plate.

KRISTIN. You're fussier than the Count, when you get started.

[*Tweaks his hair.*]

JEAN. Don't pull my hair! You know how sensitive I am.

KRISTIN. Oh—there, there! you know I was only loving you.

[*Jean eats, and Kristin opens bottle of beer.*]

JEAN. Beer on midsummer night—thank you, no! I have something better than that myself. [*Takes bottle of wine from drawer of table.*] Yellow seal, how's that? Now give me a glass—a wine glass you understand, of course, when one drinks the genuine.

KRISTIN. [*Fetches a glass. Then goes to stove and puts on casserole.*] Heaven help the

woman who gets you for her husband. Such a fuss budget!

JEAN. Oh, talk! You ought to be glad to get such a fine fellow as I am. And I don't think it's done you any harm because I'm considered your intended. [*Tastes wine.*] Excellent, very excellent! Just a little too cold. [*Warms glass with hands*]. We bought this at Dijon. It stood at four francs a litre in the bulk; then of course there was the duty besides. What are you cooking now that smells so infernally?

KRISTIN. Oh, it's some devil's mess that Miss Julie must have for Diana.

JEAN. Take care of your words, Kristin. But why should you stand there cooking for that damned dog on a holiday evening? Is it sick, eh?

KRISTIN. Yes, it's sick. Diana sneaked out with the gatekeeper's mongrels and now something is wrong. Miss Julie can't stand that.

JEAN. Miss Julie has a great deal of pride about some things—but not enough about others! Just like her mother in her lifetime; she thrived best in the kitchen or the stable, but she must always drive tandem—never one horse! She would go about with soiled cuffs but she had to have the Count's crest on her cuff buttons. And as for Miss Julie, she doesn't take much care of her appearance either. I should say she isn't refined. Why just now out there she pulled the

forester from Anna's side and asked him to dance with her. We wouldn't do things that way. But when the highborn wish to unbend they become vulgar. Splendid she is though! Magnificent! Ah, such shoulders and——

KRISTIN. Oh, don't exaggerate. I've heard what Clara says—who dresses her sometimes, I have.

JEAN. Ha! Clara—you women are always jealous of each other. I who've been out riding with her—!!! And such a dancer!

KRISTIN. Come now, Jean, don't you want to dance with me when I'm through?

JEAN. Of course I want to.

KRISTIN. That is a promise?

JEAN. Promise! When I say I will do a thing I do it! Thanks for the supper—it was excellent.

[Pushes cork in the bottle with a bang. Miss Julie appears in doorway, speaking to someone outside.]

JULIE. I'll be back soon, but don't let things wait for me.

[Jean quickly puts bottle in table drawer and rises very respectfully.]

[Enter Miss Julie and goes to Kristin.] . .

JULIE. Is it done?

[Kristin indicating Jean's presence.]

JEAN *[Gallantly]*. Have you secrets between you?

JULIE. [*Flipping handkerchief in his face*].
Curious, are you?

JEAN. How sweet that violet perfume is!

JULIE [*Coquettishly*]. Impudence! Do you appreciate perfumes too? Dance—that you can do splendidly. [*Jean looks towards the cooking stove*]. Don't look. Away with you.

JEAN [*Inquisitive but polite*]. Is it some troll's dish that you are both concocting for midsummer night? Something to pierce the future with and evoke the face of your intended?

JULIE [*Sharply*]. To see him one must have sharp eyes. [*To Kristin*]. Put it into a bottle and cork it tight. Come now, Jean and dance ■ schottische with me.

[*Jean hesitates.*]

JEAN. I don't wish to be impolite to anyone but—this dance I promised to Kristin.

JULIE. Oh, she can have another— isn't that so, Kristin? Won't you lend Jean to me.

KRISTIN. It's not for me to say, if Miss Julie is ■ gracious it's not for me to say no. [*To Jean*]. Go you and be grateful for the honor..

JEAN. Well said—but not wishing any offense I wonder if it is prudent for Miss Julie to dance twice in succession with her servant, especially ■ people are never slow to find meaning in—

JULIE [*Breaking out*]. In what? What sort of meaning? What were you going to say?

JEAN [*Taken aback*]. Since Miss Julie does not understand I must speak plainly. It may look strange to prefer one of your—underlings—to others who covet the same honor——

JULIE. To prefer—what a thought! I, the lady of the house! I honor the people with my presence and now that I feel like dancing I want to have a partner who knows how to lead to avoid being ridiculous.

JEAN. As Miss Julie commands. I'm here to serve.

JULIE [*Mildly*]. You mustn't look upon that as a command. Tonight we are all in holiday spirits—full of gladness and rank is flung aside. So, give me your arm! Don't be alarmed, Kristin, I shall not take your sweetheart away from you.

[*Jean offers arm. They exit.*]

PANTOMIME.—*Played as though the actress were really alone. Turns her back to the audience when necessary. Does not look out into the auditorium. Does not hurry as though fearing the audience might grow restless. Soft violin music from the distance, schottische time. Kristin hums with the music. She cleans the table; washes plate, wipes it and puts it in the china closet. Takes off her apron and then opens drawer of table and takes a small hand glass and stands it against a flower pot on table. Lights a candle and heats a hair pin with which she crimps her*

hair around her forehead. After that she goes to door at back and listens. Then she returns to table and sees the Countess' handkerchief, picks it up, smells of it, then smooths it out and folds it. Enter Jean.

JEAN. She is crazy I tell you! To dance like that! And the people stand grinning at her behind the doors. What do you say to that, Kristin?

KRISTIN. Oh, didn't I say she's been acting queer lately? But isn't it my turn to dance now?

JEAN. You are not angry because I let myself be led by the forelock?

KRISTIN. No, not for such a little thing. That you know well enough. And I know my place too——

JEAN [*Puts arm around her waist*]. You're a pretty smart girl, Kristin, and you ought to make a good wife.

[*Enter Miss Julie.*]

JULIE [*Disagreeably surprised, but with forced gaiety*]. You're a charming cavalier to run away from your partner.

JEAN. On the contrary, Miss Julie, I have hastened to my neglected one as you see.

JULIE [*Changing subject*]. Do you know, you dance wonderfully well! But why are you in livery on a holiday night? Take it off immediately.

JEAN. Will you excuse me—my coat hangs there.

[Goes R. and takes coat.]

JULIE. Does it embarrass you to change your coat in my presence? Go to your room then—or else stay and I'll turn my back.

JEAN. With your permission, Miss Julie.

[Exit Jean R. One sees his arm as he changes coat.]

JULIE [To Kristin]. Is Jean your sweetheart, that he is so devoted?

KRISTIN. Sweetheart? Yes, may it please you. Sweetheart—that's what they call it.

JULIE. Call it?

KRISTIN. Oh Miss Julie has herself had a sweetheart and ——

JULIE. Yes, we were engaged ——

KRISTIN. But it came to nothing.

[Enter Jean in black frock coat.]

JULIE. Très gentil, Monsieur Jean, très gentil.

JEAN. Vous voulez plaisanter, Mademoiselle.

JULIE. Et vous voulez parler français? Where did you learn that?

JEAN. In Switzerland where I was butler in the largest hotel at Lucerne.

JULIE. Why, you look like a gentleman in your frock coat. Charmant!

[Seats herself by table.]

JEAN. You flatter me!

JULIE. Flatter!

[Picking him up on the word.]

JEAN. My natural modesty forbids me to believe that you could mean these pleasant things that you say to a—such as I am—and

therefore I allowed myself to fancy that you overrate or, as it is called, flatter.

JULIE. Where did you learn to use words like that? Have you frequented the theatres much?

JEAN. I have frequented many places, I have!

JULIE. But you were born here in this neighborhood?

JEAN. My father was a cottager on the district attorney's property, and I saw Miss Julie as a child—although she didn't see me!

JULIE. No, really?

JEAN. Yes, I remember one time in particular. But I mustn't talk about that.

JULIE. Oh yes, do, when was it?

JEAN. No really—not now, another time perhaps.

JULIE. "Another time" is a good for nothing. Is it so dreadful then?

JEAN. Not dreadful—but it goes against the grain. [*Turns and points to Kristin, who has fallen asleep in a chair near stove*]. Look at her.

JULIE. She'll make a charming wife! Does she snore too?

JEAN. No, but she talks in her sleep.

JULIE [*Cynically*]. How do you know that she talks in her sleep?

JEAN [*Boldly*]. I have heard her.

[*Pause and they look at each other.*]

JULIE. Why don't you sit down?

JEAN. I can't allow myself to do so in your presence.

JULIE. But if I command you?

JEAN. Then I obey.

JULIE. Sit down then. But wait—can't you get me something to drink first?

JEAN. I don't know what there is in the icebox. Nothing but beer, probably.

JULIE. Is beer nothing? My taste is so simple that I prefer it to wine.

[Jean takes out beer and serves it on plate.]

JEAN. Allow me.

JULIE. Won't you drink too?

JEAN. I am no friend to beer—but if Miss Julie commands.

JULIE [*Gaily*]. Commands! I should think a polite cavalier you might join your lady.

JEAN. Looking at it in that way you are quite right.

[Opens another bottle of beer and fills glass.]

JULIE. Give me a toast!

[Jean hesitates.]

JULIE [*Mockingly*]. Old as he is, I believe the man is bashful!

JEAN [*On his knee with mock gallantry, raises glass*]. A health to my lady of the house!

JULIE. Bravo! Now you must kiss my slipper. Then the thing is perfect.

[Jean hesitates and then seizes her foot and kisses it lightly.]

JULIE. Splendid! You should have been an actor.

JEAN [*Rising*]. But this mustn't go any further, Miss Julie. What if someone should come in and see us?

JULIE. What harm would that do?

JEAN. Simply that it would give them a chance to gossip. And if Miss Julie only knew how their tongues wagged just now—then—

JULIE. What did they say? Tell me. And sit down now.

JEAN [*Sitting*]. I don't wish to hurt you, but they used an expression—threw hints of a certain kind—but you are not a child, you can understand. When one sees a lady drinking alone with a man—let alone a servant—at night—then ——

JULIE. Then what? And for that matter, we are not alone. Kristin is here.

JEAN. Sleeping! Yes.

JULIE. Then I shall wake her. [*Rises*]. Kristin, are you asleep?

KRISTIN. [*In her sleep*]. Bla—bla—bla—bla.

JULIE. Kristin! She certainly can sleep.

[*Goes to Kristin.*]

KRISTIN. [*In her sleep*]. The Count's boots are polished—put on the coffee—soon—soon—soon. Oh—h-h-h—puh!

[*Breathes heavily. Julie takes her by the nose.*]

JULIE. Won't you wake up?

JEAN [*Sternly*]. Don't disturb the sleeping.

JULIE [*Sharply*]. What?

JEAN. Anyone who has stood over the hot stove all day long is tired when night comes. One should respect the weary.

JULIE. That's a kind thought—and I honor it. [*Offers her hand.*] Thanks for the suggestion. Come out with me now and pick some syringas.

[*Kristin has awakened and goes to her room, right, in a sort of sleepy, stupefied way.*]

JEAN. With Miss Julie?

JULIE. With me.

JEAN. But that wouldn't do—decidedly not.

JULIE. I don't understand you. Is it possible that you fancy that I—

JEAN. No—not I, but people.

JULIE. What? That I'm in love with my coachman?

JEAN. I am not presumptuous, but we have seen instances—and with the people nothing is sacred.

JULIE. I believe he is an aristocrat!

JEAN. Yes, I am.

JULIE. But I step down — —

JEAN. Don't step down, Miss Julie. Listen to me—no one would believe that you stepped down of your own accord; people always say that one falls down.

JULIE. I think better of the people than you do. Come—and try them—come!

[*Dares him with a look.*]

JEAN. Do you know that you are wonderful?

JULIE. Perhaps. But you are too. Everything is wonderful for that matter. Life, people—everything. Everything is wreckage, that drifts over the water until it sinks, sinks. I have the same dream every now and then and at this moment I am reminded of it. I find myself seated at the top of a high pillar and I see no possible way to get down. I grow dizzy when I look down, but down I must. But I'm not brave enough to throw myself; I cannot hold fast and I long to fall—but I don't fall. And yet I can find no rest or peace until I shall come down to earth; and if I came down to earth I would wish myself down in the ground. Have you ever felt like that?

JEAN. No, I dream that I'm lying in a dark wood under a tall tree and I would up—up to the top, where I can look far over the fair landscape, where the sun is shining. I climb—climb, to plunder the birds' nests up there where the golden eggs lie, but the tree trunk is so thick, so smooth, and the first limb is so high! But I know if I reached the first limb I should climb as though on a ladder, to the top. I haven't reached it yet, but I shall reach it, if only in the dream.

JULIE. Here I stand talking about dreams with you. Come now, just out in the park.

[She offers her arm and they start.]

JEAN. We should sleep on nine midsummer

flowers tonight and then our dreams would come true.

[*She turns, Jean quickly holds a hand over his eye.*]

JULIE. What is it, something in your eye?

JEAN. Oh, it is nothing—just a speck. It will be all right in a moment.

JULIE. It was some dust from my sleeve that brushed against you. Now sit down and let me look for it. [*Pulls him into a chair, looks into his eye.*]

[*Uses corner of her handkerchief in his eye. Strikes his hand.*] So—will you mind? I believe you are trembling, strong man that you are. [*Touching his arm.*] And such arms!

JEAN [*Warningly.*] Miss Julie!

JULIE. Yes, Monsieur Jean!

JEAN. Attention. Je ne suis qu' un homme!

JULIE. Will you sit still! So, now it is gone! Kiss my hand and thank me!

[*Jean rises.*]

JEAN. Miss Julie, listen to me. Kristin has gone to bed now—will you listen to me —

JULIE. Kiss my hand first.

JEAN. Listen to me —

JULIE. Kiss my hand first.

JEAN. Yes, but blame yourself.

JULIE. For what?

JEAN. For what? Are you a child at twenty-five? Don't you know that it is dangerous to play with fire?

JULIE. Not for me. I am insured!

JEAN. No, you are not. But even if you are, there is inflammable material in the neighborhood.

JULIE. Might that be you?

JEAN. Yes, not because it is I, but because I'm a young man —

JULIE [*Scornfully*]. With a grand opportunity—what inconceivable presumption! A Don Juan perhaps! Or a Joseph! On my soul, I believe he is a Joseph!

JEAN. You do?

JULIE. Almost.

[Jean rushes towards her and tries to take her in his arms to kiss her.]

JULIE [*Gives him a box on the ear*]. Shame on you.

JEAN. Are you in earnest, or fooling?

JULIE. In earnest.

JEAN. Then you were in earnest a moment ago, too. You play too seriously with what is dangerous. Now I'm tired of playing and beg to be excused that I may go on with my work. The Count must have his boots in time, and it is long past midnight.

[Jean picks up boots.]

JULIE. Put those boots away.

JEAN. No, that is my work which it is my duty to do, but I was not hired to be your plaything and that I shall never be. I think too well of myself for that.

JULIE. You are proud.

JEAN. In some things—not in others.

JULIE. Were you ever in love?

JEAN. We do not use that word, but I have liked many girls. One time I was sick because I couldn't have the one I wanted—sick, you understand, like the princesses in the Arabian Nights who could not eat nor drink for love sickness.

JULIE. Who was she? [*Jean is silent.*] Who was she?

JEAN. That you could not make me tell.

JULIE. Not if I ask you as an equal, as a—friend? Who was she?

JEAN. It was you!

[*Julie seats herself.*]

JULIE. How extravagant!

JEAN. Yes, if you will, it was ridiculous. That was the story I hesitated to tell, but now I'm going to tell it. Do you know how people in high life look from the under world? No, of course you don't. They look like hawks and eagles whose backs one seldom sees, for they soar up above. I lived in a hovel provided by the state, with seven brothers and sisters and a pig; out on a barren stretch where nothing grew, not even a tree, but from the window I could see the Count's park walls with apple trees rising above them. That was the garden of paradise; and there stood many angry angels with flaming swords protecting it; but for all that I and other boys found the way to the tree of life—now you despise me.

JULIE. Oh, all boys steal apples.

JEAN. You say that, but you despise me all the same. No matter! One time I entered the garden of paradise—it was to weed the onion beds with my mother! Near the orchard stood a Turkish pavilion, shaded and overgrown with jessamine and honeysuckle. I didn't know what it was used for and I had never seen anything so beautiful. People passed in and out and one day—the door was left open. I sneaked in and beheld walls covered with pictures of kings and emperors and there were red-fringed curtains at the windows—now you understand what I mean—I—*[Breaks off a spray of syringa and puts it to her nostrils.]* I had never been in the castle and how my thoughts leaped—and there they returned ever after. Little by little the longing came over me to experience for once the pleasure of—enfin, I sneaked in and was bewildered. But then I heard someone coming—there was only one exit for the great folk, but for me there was another, and I had to choose that. *[Julie who has taken the syringa lets it fall on table.]* Once out I started to run, scrambled through a raspberry hedge, rushed over a strawberry bed and came to stop on the rose terrace. For there I saw a figure in a pink dress and white slippers and stockings—it was you! I hid under a heap of weeds, under, you understand, where the thistles pricked me, and lay on the damp, rank earth. I gazed at you walking among

the roses. And I thought if it is true that the thief on the cross could enter heaven and dwell among the angels it was strange that a pauper child on God's earth could not go into the castle park and play with the Count's daughter.

JULIE [*Pensively*]. Do you believe that all poor children would have such thoughts under those conditions?

JEAN [*Hesitates, then in a positive voice*]. That all poor children—yes, of course, of course!

JULIE. It must be a terrible misfortune to be poor.

JEAN [*With deep pain and great chagrin*]. Oh, Miss Julie, a dog may lie on the couch of a Countess, a horse may be caressed by a lady's hand, but a servant—yes, yes, sometimes there is stuff enough in a man, whatever he be, to swing himself up in the world, but how often does that happen! But to return to the story, do you know what I did? I ran down to the mill dam and threw myself in with my clothes on—and was pulled out and got a thrashing. But the following Sunday when all the family went to visit my grandmother I contrived to stay at home; I scrubbed myself well, put on my best clothes, such as they were, and went to church so that I might see you. I saw you. Then I went home with my mind made up to put an end to myself. But I wanted to do it beautifully and without pain. Then I happened to remember that

elderberry blossoms are poisonous. I knew where there was a big elderberry bush in full bloom and I stripped it of its riches and made a bed of it in the oat-bin. Have you ever noticed how smooth and glossy oats are? As soft as a woman's arm.—Well, I got in and let down the cover, fell asleep, and when I awoke I was very ill, but didn't die—as you see. What I wanted—I don't know. You were unattainable, but through the vision of you I was made to realize how hopeless it was to rise above the conditions of my birth.

JULIE. You tell it well! Were you ever at school?

JEAN. A little, but I have read a good deal and gone to the theatres. And besides, I have always heard the talk of fine folks and from them I have learned most.

JULIE. Do you listen then to what we are saying?

JEAN. Yes, indeed, I do. And I have heard much when I've been on the coachbox. One time I heard Miss Julie and a lady—

JULIE. Oh, what was it you heard?

JEAN. Hm! that's not so easy to tell. But I was astonished and could not understand where you had heard such things. Well, perhaps at bottom there's not so much difference between people and—people.

JULIE. Oh, shame! We don't behave as you do when we are engaged.

JEAN. [*Eyeing her*]. Are you sure of that? It isn't worth while to play the innocent with me.

JULIE. I gave my love to a rascal.

JEAN. That's what they always say afterward.

JULIE. Always?

JEAN. Always, I believe, as I have heard the expression many times before under the same circumstances.

JULIE. What circumstances?

JEAN. Those we've been talking about. The last time I — —

JULIE. Silence. I don't wish to hear any more.

JEAN. Well, then I beg to be excused so I may go to bed.

JULIE. Go to bed! On midsummer night?

JEAN. Yes, for dancing out there with that pack has not amused me.

JULIE. Then get the key for the boat and row me out over the lake. I want to see the sun rise.

JEAN. Is that prudent?

JULIE. One would think that you were afraid of your reputation.

JEAN. Why not? I don't want to be made ridiculous. I am not willing to be driven out without references, now that I am going to settle down. And I feel I owe something to Kristin.

JULIE. Oh, so it's Kristin now — —

JEAN. Yes, but you too. Take my advice, go up and go to bed.

JULIE. Shall I obey you?

JEAN. For once—for your own sake. I beg of you. Night is crawling along, sleepiness makes one irresponsible and the brain grows hot. Go to your room. In fact—if I hear rightly some of the people are coming for me. If they find us here—then you are lost.

[*Chorus is heard approaching, singing.*]

“There came two ladies out of the woods
Tridiridi-ralla tridiridi-ra.
One of them had wet her foot,
Tridiridi-ralla-la.

They talked of a hundred dollars,
Tridiridi-ralla tridiridi-ra.
But neither had hardly a dollar,
Tridiridi-ralla-la.

The mitten I’m going to send you,
Tridirichi-ralla tridiridi-ra.
For another I’m going to jilt you,
Tridiridi-ralla tridiridi-ra.

JULIE. I know the people and I love them and they respect me. Let them come, you shall see.

JEAN. No, Miss Julie, they don’t love you. They take your food and spit upon your kindness, believe me. Listen to them, listen to what they’re singing! No! Don’t listen!

JULIE [*Listening*]. What are they singing?

JEAN. It’s something suggestive, about you and me.

JULIE. Infamous! Oh horrible! And how cowardly!

JEAN. The pack is always cowardly. And in such a battle one can only run away.

JULIE. Run away? Where? We can't get out and we can't go to Kristin.

JEAN. Into my room then. Necessity knows no law. You can depend on me for I am your real, genuine, respectful friend.

JULIE. But think if they found you there.

JEAN. I will turn the key and if they try to break in I'll shoot. Come—come!

JULIE. [*Meaningly*]. You promise me——?

JEAN. I swear. . .

[*She exits R. Jean follows her.*]

BALLET.—*The farm folk enter in holiday dress with flowers in their hats, a fiddler in the lead. They carry a keg of home-brewed beer and a smaller keg of gin, both decorated with greens which are placed on the table. They help themselves to glasses and drink. Then they sing and dance a country dance to the melody of "There came two ladies out of the woods." When that is over they go out, singing.*

[*Enter Julie alone, sees the havoc the visitors have made, clasps her hands, takes out powder box and powders her face. Enter Jean exuberant.*]

JEAN. There, you see, and you heard them. Do you think it's possible for **us** to remain here any longer?

JULIE. No, I don't. But what's to be done?

JEAN. Fly! Travel—far from here!

JULIE. Travel—yes—but where?

JEAN. To Switzerland—to the Italian lakes.

You have never been there?

JULIE. No—is it beautiful there?

JEAN. Oh, an eternal summer! Orange trees, laurels—oh!

JULIE. But what shall we do there?

JEAN. I'll open a first-class hotel for first-class patrons.

JULIE. Hotel?

JEAN. That is life—you shall see! New faces constantly, different languages. Not a moment for boredom. Always something to do night and day—the bell ringing, the trains whistling, the omnibus coming and going and all the time the gold pieces rolling into the till—that is life!

JULIE. Yes, that is life. And I—?

JEAN. The mistress of the establishment—the ornament of the house. With your looks—and your manners—oh, it's a sure success! Colossal! You could sit like a queen in the office and set the slaves in action by touching an electric button. The guests line up before your throne and shyly lay their riches on your desk. You can't believe how people tremble when they get their bills—I can salt the bills and you can sweeten them with your most bewitching smile—ha, let us get away from here—*[Takes a time table from his*

pocket] immediately—by the next train. We can be at Malmö at 6.30, Hamburg at 8.40 tomorrow morning, Frankfort the day after and at Como by the St. Gothard route in about—let me see, three days. Three days!

JULIE. All that is well enough, but Jean—you must give me courage. Take me in your arms and tell me that you love me.

JEAN [*Hesitatingly*]. I will—but I daren't—not again in this house. I love you of course—do you doubt that, Miss Julie?

JULIE [*Shyly and with womanliness*]. Miss Julie! Call me Julie! Between us there can be no more formality.

JEAN. I can't—There must be formality between us—as long as we are in this house. There is the memory of the past—and there is the Count, your father. I have never known anyone else for whom I have such respect. I need only to see his gloves lying in a chair to feel my own insignificance. I have only to hear his bell to start like a nervous horse—and now as I see his boots standing there so stiff and proper I feel like bowing and scraping. [*Gives boots a kick*]. Superstitions and prejudices taught in childhood can't be uprooted in a moment. Let us go to a country that is a republic where they'll stand on their heads for my coachman's livery—on their heads shall they stand—but I shall not. I am not born to bow and scrape, for there's stuff in me—character. If I only

get hold of the first limb, you shall see me climb. I'm a coachman today, but next year I shall be a proprietor, in two years a gentleman of income; then for Roumania where I'll let them decorate me and can, mark you, ~~can~~ end a count!

JULIE. Beautiful, beautiful!

JEAN. Oh, in Roumania, one can buy a title cheap—and so you can be a countess just the same—my countess!

JULIE. What do I care for all that—which I now cast behind me. Say that you love me—else, what am I, without it?

JEAN. I'll say it a thousand times afterwards, but not here. Above all, let us have no sentimentality now or everything will fall through. We must look at this matter coldly like sensible people. [*Takes out a cigar and lights it.*] Now sit down there and I'll sit here and we'll talk it over as if nothing had happened.

JULIE [*Staggered*]. Oh, my God, have you no feeling?

JEAN. I? No one living has more feeling than I but I can restrain myself.

JULIE. A moment ago you could kiss my slipper and now——

JEAN [*Harshly*]. That was—then. Now we have other things to think about.

JULIE. Don't speak harshly to me.

JEAN. Not harshly, but wisely. One folly has been committed—commit no more. The Count

may be here at any moment, and before he comes, our fate must be settled. How do my plans for the future strike you? Do you approve of them?

JULIE. They seem acceptable enough. But one question. For such a great undertaking ■ large capital is necessary, have you that?

JEAN [*Chewing his cigar*]. I? To be sure. I have my regular occupation, my unusual experience, my knowledge of different languages—that is capital that counts, I should say.

JULIE. But with all that you could not buy ■ railway ticket.

JEAN. That's true, and for that reason I'm looking for a backer who can furnish the funds.

JULIE. How can that be done at ■ moment's notice?

JEAN. That is for you to say, if you wish to be my companion.

JULIE. I can't—as I have nothing myself.

[*A pause.*]

JEAN. Then the whole matter drops— —

JULIE. And — —

JEAN. Things remain as they are.

JULIE. Do you think I could remain under this roof after —— Do you think I will allow the people to point at me in scorn, or that I can ever look my father in the face again? Never! Take me away from this humiliation

and dishonor. Oh, what have I done! Oh, my God, what have I done!

[Weeping.]

JEAN. So, you are beginning in that tune now. What have you done? The same as many before you.

JULIE. And now you despise me. I am falling! I am falling!

JEAN. Fall down to my level, I'll lift you up afterwards.

JULIE. What strange power drew me to you—
—the weak to the strong—the falling to the rising, or is this love! This—love! Do you know what love is?

JEAN. I? Yes! Do you think it's the first time?

JULIE. What language, what thoughts.

JEAN. I am what life has made me. Don't be nervous and play the high and mighty, for now we are on the same level. Look here, my little girl, let me offer you a glass of something extra fine.

[Opens drawer of table and takes out wine bottle, then fills two glasses that have been already used.]

JULIE. Where did you get that wine?

JEAN. From the cellar.

JULIE. My father's Burgundy.

JEAN. What's the matter, isn't that good enough for the son-in-law?

JULIE. And I drink beer—I!

JEAN. That only goes to prove that your taste is poorer than mine.

JULIE. Thief!

JEAN. Do you intend to tattle?

JULIE. Oh ho! Accomplice to a house thief. Was I intoxicated—have I been walking in my sleep this night—midsummer night, the night for innocent play ——

JEAN. Innocent, eh!

JULIE [*Pacing back and forth*]. Is there a being on earth so miserable as I.

JEAN. Why are you, after such a conquest? Think of Kristin in there, don't you think she has feelings too?

JULIE. I thought so a little while ago, but I don't any more. A servant is a servant.

JEAN. And a whore is a whore.

JULIE [*Falls on her knees with clasped hands*].

Oh, God in heaven, end my wretched life, save me from this mire into which I'm sinking—
Oh save me, save me.

JEAN. I can't deny that it hurts me to see you like this.

JULIE. And you who wanted to die for me.

JEAN. In the oat-bin? Oh, that was only talk.

JULIE. That is to say—a lie!

JEAN [*Beginning to show sleepiness*]. Er—er almost. I believe I read something of the sort in a newspaper about a chimney-sweep who made a death bed for himself of syringa blossoms in a wood-bin—[*laughs*] because they were going to arrest him for non-support of his children.

JULIE. So you are such a—

JEAN. What better could I have hit on! One must always be romantic to capture a woman.

JULIE. Wretch! Now you have seen the eagle's back, and I suppose I am to be the first limb —

JEAN. And the limb is rotten —

JULIE [*Without seeming to hear*]. And I am to be the hotel's signboard —

JEAN. And I the hotel —

JULIE. And sit behind the desk and allure guests and overcharge them—

JEAN. Oh, that'll be my business.

JULIE. That a soul can be so degraded!

JEAN. Look to your own soul.

JULIE. Lackey! Servant! Stand up when I speak.

JEAN. Don't you dare to moralize to me. Lackey, eh! Do you think you have shown yourself finer than any maid-servant tonight?

JULIE [*Crushed*]. That is right, strike me, trample on me, I deserve nothing better. I have done wrong, but help me now. Help me out of this if there is any possible way.

JEAN [*Softens somewhat*]. I don't care to shirk my share of the blame, but do you think any one of my position would ever have dared to raise his eyes to you if you yourself had not invited it? Even now I am astonished—

JULIE. And proud.

JEAN. Why not? Although I must confess that the conquest was too easy to be exciting.

JULIE. Go on, strike me again—

JEAN [*Rising*]. No, forgive me, rather, for what I said. I do not strike the unarmed, least of all, a woman. But I can't deny that from a certain point of view it gives me satisfaction to know that it is the glitter of brass, not gold, that dazzles us from below, and that the eagle's back is grey like the rest of him. On the other hand, I'm sorry to have to realize that all that I have looked up to is not worth while, and it pains me to see you fallen lower than your cook as it pains me to see autumn blossoms whipped to pieces by the cold rain and transformed into—dirt!

JULIE. You speak as though you were already my superior.

JEAN. And so I am! For I can make you a countess and you could never make me a count.

JULIE. But I am born of a count, that you can never be.

JEAN. That is true, but I can be the father of counts—if—

JULIE. But you are a thief—that I am not.

JEAN. There are worse things than that, and for that matter when I serve in a house I regard myself as a member of the family, a child of the house as it were. And one doesn't consider it theft if children snoop a berry from full bushes. [*With renewed passion*]. Miss Julie, you are a glorious woman—too good for such as I. You have been the victim of an infatuation and you want to dis-

guise this fault by fancying that you love me. But you do not—unless perhaps my outer self attracts you. And then your love is no better than mine. But I cannot be satisfied with that, and your real love I can never awaken.

JULIE. Are you sure of that?

JEAN. You mean that we could get along with such an arrangement? There's no doubt about my loving you—you are beautiful, you are elegant—*[Goes to her and takes her hand]* accomplished, lovable when you wish to be, and the flame that you awaken in man does not die easily. *[Puts arm around her.]* You are like hot wine with strong spices, and your lips—

[Tries to kiss her. Julie pulls herself away slowly.]

JULIE. Leave me—I'm not to be won this way.

JEAN. How then? Not with caresses and beautiful words? Not by thoughts for the future, to save humiliation? How then?

JULIE. How? I don't know. I don't know! I shrink from you as I would from a rat. But I cannot escape from you.

JEAN. Escape with me.

JULIE. Escape? Yes, we must escape.—But I'm so tired. Give me a glass of wine. *[Jean fills a glass with wine, Julie looks at her watch.]* We must talk it over first for we have still a little time left.

[She empties the glass and puts it out for more.]

JEAN. Don't drink too much. It will go to your head.

JULIE. What harm will that do?

JEAN. What harm? It's foolish to get intoxicated. But what did you want to say?

JULIE. We must go away, but we must talk first. That is, I must speak, for until now you have done all the talking. You have told me about your life—now I will tell you about mine, then we will know each other through and through before we start on our wandering together.

JEAN. One moment, pardon. Think well whether you won't regret having told your life's secrets.

JULIE. Aren't you my friend?

JEAN. Yes. Sometimes. But don't depend on me.

JULIE. You only say that. And for that matter I have no secrets. You see, my mother was not of noble birth. She was brought up with ideas of equality, woman's freedom and all that. She had very decided opinions against matrimony, and when my father courted her she declared that she would never be his wife—but she did so for all that. I came into the world against my mother's wishes, I discovered, and was brought up like a child of nature by my mother, and taught everything that a boy must know as well; I

was to be an example of a woman being as good as a man—I was made to go about in boy's clothes and take care of the horses and harness and saddle and hunt, and all such things; in fact, all over the estate women servants were taught to do men's work, with the result that the property came near being ruined—and so we became the laughing stock of the countryside. At last my father must have awakened from his bewitched condition, for he revolted and ran things according to his ideas. My mother became ill—what it was I don't know, but she often had cramps and acted queerly—sometimes hiding in the attic or the orchard, and would even be gone all night at times. Then came the big fire which of course you have heard about. The house, the stables—everything was burned, under circumstances that pointed strongly to an incendiary, for the misfortune happened the day after the quarterly insurance was due and the premiums sent in by father were strangely delayed by his messenger so that they arrived too late.

[She fills a wine glass and drinks.]

JEAN. Don't drink any more.

JULIE. Oh, what does it matter? My father was utterly at a loss to know where to get money to rebuild with. Then my mother suggested that he try to borrow from a man who had been her friend in her youth—a brick manufacturer here in the neighborhood. My

father made the loan, but wasn't allowed to pay any interest, which surprised him. Then the house was rebuilt. [*Julie drinks again.*]

Do you know who burned the house?

JEAN. Her ladyship, your mother?

JULIE. Do you know who the brick manufacturer was?

JEAN. Your mother's lover?

JULIE. Do you know whose money it was?

JEAN. Just a moment, that I don't know.

JULIE. It was my mother's.

JEAN. The Count's—that is to say, unless there was a contract.

JULIE. There was no contract. My mother had some money which she had not wished to have in my father's keeping and therefore, she had entrusted it to her friend's care.

JEAN. Who kept it.

JULIE. Quite right—he held on to it. All this came to my father's knowledge. He couldn't proceed against him, wasn't allowed to pay his wife's friend, and couldn't prove that it was his wife's money. That was my mother's revenge for his taking the reins of the establishment into his own hands. At that time he was ready to shoot himself. Gossip had it that he had tried and failed. Well, he lived it down—and my mother paid full penalty for her misdeed. Those were five terrible years for me, as you can fancy. I sympathized with my father, but I took my mother's part, for I didn't know the true cir-

cumstances. Through her I learned to distrust and hate men, and I swore to her never to be a man's slave.

JEAN. But you became engaged to the District Attorney.

JULIE. Just to make him my slave.

JEAN. But that he didn't care to be.

JULIE. He wanted to be, fast enough, but I grew tired of him.

JEAN. Yes—I noticed that—in the stable-yard!

JULIE. What do you mean?

JEAN. I saw how he broke—the engagement.

JULIE. That's a lie. It was I who broke it. Did he say he broke it—the wretch!

JEAN. I don't believe that he was a wretch.

You hate men, Miss Julie.

JULIE. Most of them. Sometimes one is weak—

JEAN. You hate me?

JULIE. Excessively. I could see you shot —

JEAN. Like a mad dog?

JULIE. Exactly!

JEAN. But there is nothing here to shoot with.

What shall we do then?

JULIE [*Rousing herself*]. We must get away from here—travel.

JEAN. And torture each other to death?

JULIE. No—to enjoy, a few days, a week—as long as we can. And then to die.

JEAN. Die! How silly. I think it's better to start the hotel.

JULIE [*Not heeding him*]. By the Lake of Como

where the sun is always shining, where the laurel is green at Christmas and the oranges glow.

JEAN. The Lake of Como is a rain hole, I never saw any oranges there except on fruit stands. But it's a good resort, and there are many villas to rent to loving couples. That's a very paying industry. You know why? They take leases for half a year at least, but they usually leave in three weeks.

JULIE [*Naïvely*]. Why after three weeks?

JEAN. Why? They quarrel of course, but the rent must be paid all the same. Then you re-let, and so one after another they come and go, for there is plenty of love, although it doesn't last long.

JULIE. Then you don't want to die with me?

JEAN. I don't want to die at all, both because I enjoy living and because I regard suicide as a crime to Him who has given us life.

JULIE. Then you believe in God?

JEAN. Yes. Of course I do, and I go to church every other Sunday—But I'm tired of all this and I'm going to bed.

JULIE. Do you think I would allow myself to be satisfied with such an ending? Do you know what a man owes to a woman he has — —

JEAN [*Takes out a silver coin and throws it on the table*]. Allow me, I don't want to owe anything to anyone.

JULIE [*Pretending not to notice the insult*]. Do you know what the law demands?

JEAN. I know that the law demands nothing of
■ a woman who seduces a man.

JULIE [*Again not heeding him*]. Do you see any
way out of it but to travel?—wed—and sep-
arate?

JEAN. And if I protest against this misalli-
ance?

JULIE. Misalliance!

JEAN. Yes, for me. For you see I have a finer
ancestry than you, for I have no fire-bug in
my family.

JULIE. How do you know?

JEAN. You can't prove the contrary. We have
no family record except that which the police
keep. But your pedigree I have read in ■
book on the drawing room table. Do you
know who the founder of your family was?
It was a miller whose wife found favor with
the king during the Danish War. Such an-
cestry I have not.

JULIE. This is my reward for opening my heart
to anyone so unworthy, with whom I have
talked about my family honor.

JEAN. Dishonor—yes, I said it. I told you not
to drink because then one talks too freely and
one should never talk.

JULIE. Oh, how I repent all this. If at least
you loved me!

JEAN. For the last time—what do you mean?
Shall I weep, shall I jump over your riding
whip, shall I kiss you, lure you to Lake Como
for three weeks, and then—what do you want

anyway? This is getting tiresome. But that's the way it always is when you get mixed up in women's affairs. Miss Julie, I see that you are unhappy, I know that you suffer, but I can't understand you. Among my kind there is no nonsense of this sort; we love as we play—when work gives us time. We haven't the whole day and night for it like you.

JULIE. You must be good to me and speak to me as though I were a human being.

JEAN. Be one yourself. You spit on me and expect me to stand it.

JULIE. Help me, help me. Only tell me what to do—show me a way out of this!

JEAN. In heaven's name, if I only knew myself.

JULIE. I have been raving, I have been mad, but is there no means of deliverance?

JEAN. Stay here at home and say nothing. No one knows.

JULIE. Impossible. These people know it, and Kristin.

JEAN. They don't know it and could never suspect such a thing.

JULIE [*Hesitating*]. But—it might happen again.

JEAN. That is true.

JULIE. And the consequences?

JEAN [*Frightened*]. Consequences—where were my wits not to have thought of that! There is only one thing to do. Get away from here

immediately. I can't go with you or they will suspect. You must go alone—away from here—anywhere.

JULIE. Alone? Where? I cannot.

JEAN. You must—and before the Count returns. If you stay, we know how it will be. If one has taken a false step it's likely to happen again as the harm has already been done, and one grows more and more daring until at last all is discovered. Write the Count afterward and confess all—except that it was I. That he could never guess, and I don't think he'll be so anxious to know who it was, anyway.

JULIE. I will go if you'll go with me.

JEAN. Are you raving again? Miss Julie running away with her coachman? All the papers would be full of it and that the Count could never live through.

JULIE. I can't go—I can't stay. Help me, I'm so tired—so weary. Command me, set me in motion—I can't think any more,—can't act—

JEAN. See now, what creatures you aristocrats are! Why do you bristle up and stick up your noses as though you were the lords of creation. Very well—I will command you! Go up and dress yourself and see to it that you have travelling money and then come down. [*She hesitates.*] Go immediately.

[*She still hesitates. He takes her hand and leads her to door.*]

JULIE. Speak gently to me, Jean.

JEAN. A command always sounds harsh. Feel it yourself now.

[Exit Julie.

[Jean draws a sigh of relief, seats himself by the table, takes out a notebook and pencil and counts aloud now and then until Kristin comes in, dressed for church.]

KRISTIN. My heavens, how it looks here. What's been going on?

JEAN. Oh, Miss Julie dragged in the people. Have you been sleeping so soundly that you didn't hear anything?

KRISTIN. I've slept like a log.

JEAN. And already dressed for church!

KRISTIN. Ye-es, [*Sleepily*] didn't you promise to go to early service with me?

JEAN. Yes, quite so, and there you have my stock and front. All right.

[*He seats himself. Kristin putting on his stock.*]

JEAN [*Sleepily*]. What is the text today?

KRISTIN. St. John's Day! It is of course about the beheading of John the Baptist.

JEAN. I'm afraid it will be terribly long drawn out—that. Hey, you're choking me. I'm so sleepy, so sleepy.

KRISTIN. What have you been doing up all night? You are actually green in the face.

JEAN. I have been sitting here talking to Miss Julie.

KRISTIN. Oh you don't know your place.

[*Pause.*]

JEAN. Listen, Kristin.

KRISTIN. Well?

JEAN. It's queer about her when you think it over.

KRISTIN. What is queer?

JEAN. The whole thing.

[*Pause. Kristin looks at half empty glasses on table.*]

KRISTIN. Have you been drinking together, too?

JEAN. Yes!

KRISTIN. For shame. Look me in the eye.

JEAN. Yes.

KRISTIN. Is it possible? Is it possible?

JEAN [*After reflecting*]. Yes, it is.

KRISTIN. Ugh! That I would never have believed. For shame, for shame!

JEAN. You are not jealous of her?

KRISTIN. No, not of her. But if it had been Clara or Sophie—then I would have scratched your eyes out. So that is what has happened—how I can't understand! No, that wasn't very nice!

JEAN. Are you mad at her?

KRISTIN. No, but with you. That was bad of you, very bad. Poor girl. Do you know what—I don't want to be here in this house any longer where one cannot respect one's betters.

JEAN. Why should one respect them?

KRISTIN. Yes, you can say that, you are so smart. But I don't want to serve people who behave so. It reflects on oneself, I think.

JEAN. Yes, but it's a comfort that they're not a bit better than we.

KRISTIN. No, I don't think so, for if they are not better there's no use in our trying to better ourselves in this world. And to think of the Count! Think of him who has had so much sorrow all his days? No, I don't want to stay in this house any longer! And to think of it being with such as you! If it had been the Lieutenant—if it had been a better man—

JEAN. What's that?

KRISTIN. Yes! You are good enough, to be sure, but there's a difference between people just the same. No, this I can never forget. Miss Julie who was always so proud and indifferent to men! One never would believe that she would give herself—and to one like you! She who was ready to have Diana shot because she would run after the gatekeeper's mongrels. Yes, I say it—and here I won't stay any longer and on the twenty-fourth of October I go my way.

JEAN. And then?

KRISTIN. Well, as we've come to talk about it, it's high time you looked around for something else, since we're going to get married.

JEAN. Well, what'll I look for? A married man couldn't get a place like this.

KRISTIN. No, of course not. But you could take a gatekeeper's job or look for a watchman's place in some factory. The government's

plums are few, but they are sure. And then the wife and children get a pension—

JEAN [*With a grimace*]. That's all very fine—
—all that, but it's not exactly in my line to think about dying for my wife and children just now. I must confess that I have slightly different aspirations.

KRISTIN. Aspirations? Aspirations — anyway you have obligations. Think of those, you.

JEAN. Don't irritate me with talk about my obligations. I know my own business. [*He listens.*] We'll have plenty of time for all this some other day. Go and get ready and we'll be off to church.

KRISTIN [*Listening*]. Who's that walking upstairs?

JEAN. I don't know—unless it's Clara.

KRISTIN [*Starting to go*]. It could never be the Count who has come home without anyone hearing him?

JEAN [*Frightened*]. The Count! I can't believe that. He would have rung the bell.

KRISTIN. God help us! Never have I been mixed up in anything like this!

[*Exit Kristin.*

The sun has risen and lights up the scene. Presently the sunshine comes in through windows at an angle. Jean goes to door and motions. Enter Julie, dressed for travelling, carrying a small bird cage covered with a cloth, which she places on a chair.]

JULIE. I am ready!

JEAN. Hush, Kristin is stirring!

[*Julie frightened and nervous throughout following scene.*]

JULIE. Does she suspect anything?

JEAN. She knows nothing. But, good heavens, how you look!

JULIE. Why?

JEAN. You are pale as a ghost.

JULIE [*Sighs*]. Am I? Oh, the sun is rising, the sun!

JEAN. And now the troll's spell is broken.

JULIE. The trolls have indeed been at work this night. But, Jean, listen—come with me, I have money enough.

JEAN. Plenty?

JULIE. Enough to start with. Go with me for I can't go alone—today, midsummer day. Think of the stuffy train, packed in with the crowds of people staring at one; the long stops at the stations when one would be speeding away. No, I cannot, I cannot! And then the memories, childhood's memories of midsummer day—the church decorated with birch branches and syringa blossoms; the festive dinner table with relations and friends, afternoon in the park, music, dancing, flowers and games—oh, one may fly, fly, but anguish and remorse follow in the pack wagon.

JEAN. I'll go with you—if we leave instantly—before it's too late.

JULIE. Go and dress then.

[*She takes up bird cage.*]

JEAN. But no baggage! That would betray us.

JULIE. Nothing but what we can take in the coupé.

[*Jean has picked up his hat.*]

JEAN. What have you there?

JULIE. It's only my canary. I cannot, will not, leave it behind.

JEAN. So we are to lug a bird cage with us. Are you crazy? Let go of it.

JULIE. It is all I take from home. The only living creature that cares for me. Don't be hard—let me take it with me.

JEAN. Let go the cage and don't talk so loud. Kristin will hear us.

JULIE. No, I will not leave it to strange hands. I would rather see it dead.

JEAN. Give me the creature. I'll fix it.

JULIE. Yes, but don't hurt it. Don't—no, I cannot.

JEAN. Let go. I can.

JULIE [*Takes the canary from cage*]. Oh, my little siren. Must your mistress part with you?

JEAN. Be so good as not to make a scene. Your welfare, your life, is at stake. So—quickly. [*Snatches bird from her and goes to chopping block and takes up meat chopper*]. You should have learned how to chop off a chicken's head instead of shooting with a revolver.

[*He chops off the bird's head*]. Then you wouldn't swoon at a drop of blood.

JULIE [*Shrieks*]. Kill me, too. Kill me! You who can butcher an innocent bird without a tremble. Oh, how I shrink from you. I curse the moment I first saw you. I curse the moment I was conceived in my mother's womb.

JEAN. Come now! What good is your cursing, let's be off.

JULIE [*Looks toward chopping block as though obsessed by thought of the slain bird*]. No, I cannot. I must see — — hush, a carriage is passing. Don't you think I can stand the sight of blood? You think I am weak. Oh, I should like to see your blood flowing—to see your brain on the chopping block, all your sex swimming in a sea of blood. I believe I could drink out of your skull, bathe my feet in your breast and eat your heart cooked whole. You think I am weak; you believe that I love you because my life has mingled with yours; you think that I would carry your offspring under my heart, and nourish it with my blood—give birth to your child and take your name! Hear, you, what are you called, what is your family name? But I'm sure you have none. I should be "Mrs. Gate-Keeper," perhaps, or "Madame Dump-heap." You dog with my collar on, you lackey with my father's hallmark on your buttons. I play rival to my cook—oh—oh—

oh! You believe that I am cowardly and want to run away. No, now I shall stay. The thunder may roll. My father will return—and find his desk broken into—his money gone! Then he will ring—that bell. A scuffle with his servant—then sends for the police—and then I tell all—everything! Oh, it will be beautiful to have it all over with—if only that were the end! And my father—he'll have a shock and die, and then that will be the end. Then they will place his swords across the coffin—and the Count's line is extinct. The serf's line will continue in an orphanage, win honors in the gutter and end in prison.

JEAN. Now it is the king's blood talking. Splendid, Miss Julie! Only keep the miller in his sack.

[*Enter Kristin with prayer-book in hand.*]

JULIE [*Hastening to Kristin and falls in her arms as though seeking protection*]. Help me, Kristin, help me against this man.

KRISTIN [*Cold and unmoved*]. What kind of performance is this for a holy day morning? What does this mean—this noise and fuss?

JULIE. Kristin, you are a woman,—and my friend. Beware of this wretch.

JEAN [*A little embarrassed and surprised*]. While the ladies are arguing I'll go and shave myself.

[*Jean goes, R.*]

JULIE. You must understand me—you must listen to me.

KRISTIN. No—I can't understand all this bosh. Where may you be going in your traveling dress?—and he had his hat on! Hey?

JULIE. Listen to me, Kristin, listen to me and I'll tell you everything.

KRISTIN. I don't want to know anything—

JULIE. You must listen to me —

KRISTIN. What about? Is it that foolishness with Jean? That doesn't concern me at all. That I won't be mixed up with, but if you're trying to lure him to run away with you then we must put a stop to it.

JULIE [*Nervously*]. Try to be calm now Kristin, and listen to me. I can't stay here and Jean can't stay here. That being true, we must leave — — Kristin.

KRISTIN. Hm, hm!

JULIE [*Brightening up*]. But I have an idea—what if we three should go—away—to foreign parts. To Switzerland and set up a hotel together—I have money you see—and Jean and I would back the whole thing, you could run the kitchen. Won't that be fine? Say yes, now—and come with us—then everything would be arranged—say yes!

[*Throws her arms around Kristin and coaxes her*].

KRISTIN [*Cold and reflecting*]. Hm—hm!

JULIE [*Presto tempo*]. You have never been out and traveled, Kristin. You shall look

about you in the world. You can't believe how pleasant traveling on a train is—new faces continually, new countries—and we'll go to Hamburg—and passing through we'll see the zoological gardens—that you will like—then we'll go to the theatre—and hear the opera—and when we reach Munich there will be the museum—there are Rubens and Raphaels and all the big painters that you know—you have heard of Munich—where King Ludwig lived—the King, you know, who went mad. Then we'll see his palace—a palace like those in the Sagas—and from there it isn't far to Switzerland—and the Alps, the Alps mind you with snow in mid-summer. And there oranges grow and laurel—green all the year round if—

[Jean is seen in the doorway R. stopping his razor on the strop which he holds between his teeth and left hand. He listens and nods his head favorably now and then. Julie continues, tempo prestissimo]

And there we'll take a hotel and I'll sit taking the cash while Jean greets the guests—goes out and markets—writes letters—that will be life, you may believe—then the train whistles—then the omnibus comes—then a bell rings upstairs, then in the restaurant—and then I make out the bills—and I can salt them—you can't think how people tremble when they receive their bill—and you—you can sit like a lady—of course you won't have to

stand over the stove—you can dress finely and neatly when you show yourself to the people—and you with your appearance—Oh, I'm not flattering, you can catch a husband some fine day—a rich Englishman perhaps—they are so easy to—*[Slowing up]* to catch — — Then we'll be rich — and then we'll build a villa by Lake Como—to be sure it rains sometimes—but *[becoming languid]* the sun must shine too sometimes — — — although it seems dark — — — and if not —we can at least travel homeward — and come back — here — or some other place.

KRISTIN. Listen now. Does Miss Julie believe in all this?

[Julie going to pieces.]

JULIE. Do I believe in it?

KRISTIN. Yes.

JULIE *[Tired]*. I don't know. I don't believe in anything any more. *[Sinks down on bench, and takes head in her hand on table.]*
In nothing—nothing!

KRISTIN *[Turns to R. and looks toward Jean]*. So—you intended to run away?

JEAN *[Rather shamefaced comes forward and puts razor on table]*. Run away? That's putting it rather strong. You heard Miss Julie's project, I think it might be carried out.

KRISTIN. Now listen to that! Was it meant that I should be cook—to that—

JEAN [*Sharply*]. Be so good as to use proper language when you speak of your mistress.

KRISTIN. Mistress?

JEAN. Yes.

KRISTIN. No—hear! Listen to him!

JEAN. Yes, you listen—you need to, and talk less. Miss Julie is your mistress and for the same reason that you do not respect her now you should not respect yourself.

KRISTIN. I have always had so much respect for myself —

JEAN. That you never had any left for others!

KRISTIN. I have never lowered my position. Let any one say, if they can, that the Count's cook has had anything to do with the riding master or the swineherd. Let them come and say it!

JEAN. Yes, you happened to get a fine fellow. That was your good luck.

KRISTIN. Yes, a fine fellow—who sells the Count's oats from his stable.

JEAN. Is it for you to say anything—you who get a commission on all the groceries and a bribe from the butcher?

KRISTIN. What's that?

JEAN. And you can't have respect for your master and mistress any longer—you, you!

KRISTIN [*Glad to change the subject*]. Are you coming to church with me? You need a good sermon for your actions.

JEAN. No, I'm not going to church today. You can go alone—and confess your doings.

KRISTIN. Yes, that I shall do, and I shall return with so much forgiveness that there will be enough for you too. The Savior suffered and died on the cross for all our sins, and when we go to Him in faith and a repentant spirit he takes our sins on Himself.

JULIE. Do you believe that, Kristin?

KRISTIN. That is my life's belief, as true as I stand here. And that was my childhood's belief that I have kept since my youth, Miss Julie. And where sin overflows, there mercy overflows also.

JULIE. Oh, if I only had your faith. Oh, if—

KRISTIN. Yes, but you see that is not given without God's particular grace, and that is not allotted to all, that!

JULIE. Who are the chosen?

KRISTIN. That is the great secret of the Kingdom of Grace, and the Lord has no respect for persons. But there the last shall be first.

JULIE. But then has he respect for the last—the lowliest person?

KRISTIN [*Continuing*]. It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. That's the way it is, Miss Julie. However—now I am going—alone. And on my way I shall stop in and tell the stable boy not to let any horses go out in case any one wants to get away before the Count comes home. Good bye.

[*Exit Kristin.*]

JEAN. Such a devil. And all this on account of your confounded canary!

JULIE [*Tired*]. Oh, don't speak of the canary—do you see any way out—any end to this?

JEAN [*Thinking*]. No.

JULIE. What would you do in my place?

JEAN. In your place—wait. As a noble lady, as a woman—fallen—I don't know. Yes, now I know.

JULIE [*She takes up razor from table and and makes gestures saying*] This?

JEAN. Yes. But I should not do it, mark you, for there is a difference between us.

JULIE. Because you are a man and I am a woman? What other difference is there?

JEAN. That very difference — of man and woman.

JULIE [*Razor in hand*]. I want to do it—but I can't. My father couldn't either that time when he should have done it.

JEAN. No, he was right, not to do it—he had to avenge himself first.

JULIE. And now my mother revenges herself again through me.

JEAN. Haven't you loved your father, Miss Julie?

JULIE. Yes, deeply. But I have probably hated him too, I must have—without being aware of it. And it is due to my father's training that I have learned to scorn my own sex. Between them both they have made me half man, half woman. Whose is the fault for what

has happened—my father's? My mother's? My own? I haven't anything of my own. I haven't a thought which was not my father's—not a passion that wasn't my mother's. And last of all from my betrothed the idea that all people are equal. For that I now call him a wretch. How can it be my own fault then? Throw the burden on Jesus as Kristin did? No, I am too proud, too intelligent, thanks to my father's teaching. — — And that a rich man cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven—that is a lie, and Kristin, who has money in the savings bank—she surely cannot enter there. Whose is the fault? What does it concern us whose fault it is? It is I who must bear the burden and the consequences.

JEAN. Yes, but — —

[Two sharp rings on bell are heard. Julie starts to her feet. Jean changes his coat.]

JEAN. The Count—has returned. Think if Kristin has —

[Goes up to speaking tube and listens.]

JULIE. Now he has seen the desk!

JEAN *[Speaking in the tube]*. It is Jean, Excellency. *[Listens]*. Yes, Excellency. *[Listens]*. Yes, Excellency,—right away—immediately, Excellency. Yes—in half an hour.

JULIE *[In great agitation]*. What did he say? In Heaven's name, what did he say?

JEAN. He wants his boots and coffee in a half hour.

JULIE. In half an hour then. Oh, I'm ~~so~~ tired— I'm incapable of feeling, not able to be sorry, not able to go, not able to stay, not able to live—not able to die. Help me now. Command me—I will obey like a dog. Do me this last service—save my honor. Save his name. You know what I have the will to do—but cannot do. You will it and command me to execute your will.

JEAN. I don't know why—but now I can't either.—I don't understand myself. It is absolutely as though this coat does it—but I can't command you now. And since the Count spoke to me — — I can't account for it—but oh, it is that damned servant in my back—I believe if the Count came in here now and told me to cut my throat I would do it on the spot.

JULIE. Make believe you are he—and I you. You could act so well a little while ago when you knelt at my feet. Then you were a nobleman—or haven't you ever been at the theatre and seen the hypnotist—[*Jean nods*] He says to his subject "Take the broom," and he takes it; he says, "Sweep," and he sweeps.

JEAN. Then the subject must be asleep!

JULIE [*Ecstatically*]. I sleep already. The whole room is like smoke before me—and you are like a tall black stove, like a man clad in black clothes with a high hat; and your eyes gleam like the hot coals when the fire is

dying; and your face ■ white spot like fallen ashes. [*The sunshine is coming in through the windows and falls on Jean. Julie rubs her hands as though warming them before ■ fire*]. It is so warm and good—and so bright and quiet!

JEAN [*Takes razor and puts it in her hand*].

There is the broom, go now while it's bright—out to the hay loft—and—

[*He whispers in her ear.*]

JULIE [*Rousing herself*]. Thanks. And now I go to rest. But tell me this—the foremost may receive the gift of Grace? Say it, even if you don't believe it.

JEAN. The foremost? No, I can't say that. But wait, Miss Julie—you are no longer among the foremost since you are of the lowliest.

JULIE. That's true, I am the lowliest—the lowliest of the lowly. Oh, now I can't go. Tell me once more that I must go.

JEAN. No, now I cannot either—I cannot.

JULIE. And the first shall be last — — —

JEAN. Don't think. You take my strength from me, too, so that I become cowardly. — What — — I thought I heard the bell! — — No! To be afraid of the sound of ■ bell! But it's not the bell—it's someone behind the bell, the hand that sets the bell in motion—and something else that sets the hand in motion. But stop your ears, stop your ears. Then he will only ring louder and keep on ringing until it's answered — and then it is

too late! Then come the police—and then—
[*Two loud rings on bell are heard, Jean falls
in a heap for a moment, but straightens up
immediately.*] It is horrible! But there is no
other way. Go.

[*Julie goes out resolutely.*]

CURTAIN.

THE OUTLAW

CHARACTERS

THORFINN, Erl of Iceland

VALGERD, his wife

GUNLÖD, their daughter

GUNNAR, a Crusader

ORM, a minstrel, foster brother to Thorfinn

A THRALL

A MESSENGER

Action takes place in Iceland.

THE OUTLAW

SCENE—*A hut, door at back, window-holes, right and left, closed by big heavy wooden shutters. Wooden benches against walls, the high bench, a sort of rude throne, at left. The uprights of this high bench are carved with images of the gods Odin and Thor. From the wall beams hang swords, battle axes and shields. Near the high bench stands a harp. Gunlöd stands at an open window-hole peering out; through the opening one gets a glimpse of the sea lighted by the aurora borealis. Valgerd sits by the fire, which is in the middle of the room, spinning.*

VALGERD. Close the window-hole.

[Gunlöd is silent.]

VALGERD. Gunlöd!

GUNLÖD. Did you speak, mother?

VALGERD. What are you doing?

GUNLÖD. I am watching the sea.

VALGERD. When will you learn to forget?

GUNLÖD. Take everything away from me but memories!

VALGERD. Look forward—not back.

GUNLÖD. Who reproaches the strong viking who looks back when he is quitting his native strand?

STRINDBERG

VALGERD. You have had three winters to make your farewell.

GUNLÖD. You speak truly—three winters! For here never came a summer!

VALGERD. When the floating ice melts, then shall spring be here.

GUNLÖD. The Northern Lights melt no ice.

VALGERD. Nor your tears.

GUNLÖD. You never saw me weep.

VALGERD. But I have heard you. As long as you do that, you are a child.

GUNLÖD. I am not a child.

VALGERD. If you would be a woman, suffer in silence.

GUNLÖD. I'll cast sorrow from me, mother.

VALGERD. No, no—bury it, as your deepest treasure. The seed must not lie on top of the earth if it would sprout and ripen. You have a deep sorrow. It should bear great gladness—and great peace.

GUNLÖD [*After a pause*]. I shall forget.

VALGERD. Everything?

GUNLÖD. I shall try.

VALGERD. Can you forget your father's hardness?

GUNLÖD. That I have forgotten.

VALGERD. Can you forget that there was a time when your fore-fathers' dwelling stood on Brövikens' strand? Where the south wind sang in the oak wood when the ice-bound seas ran free—where the hemlocks gave forth their fragrance and the finches twittered

among the linden trees—and Balder, the God of spring and joy, lulled you to sleep on the green meadows? Can you forget all this, while you listen to the sea gulls' plaints on these bare rocks and cliffs, and the cold storms out of the north howl through the stunted birches?

GUNLÖD. Yes!

VALGERD. Can you forget the friend of your childhood from whom your father tore you to save you from the white Christ?

GUNLÖD [*in desperation*]. Yes, yes!

VALGERD. You are weeping.

GUNLÖD [*Disturbed*]. Some one is walking out there. Perhaps father is coming home.

VALGERD. Will you bear in mind every day without tears that we now dwell in the land of ice—fugitives from the kingdom of Svea and hated here by the Christ-men? But we have suffered no loss of greatness, although we have not been baptized and kissed the bishop's hand. Have you ever spoken to any of the Christians since we have been here?

GUNLÖD [*After a pause*]. No. Tell me, mother, is it true that father is to be Erl here in Iceland, too?

VALGERD. Don't let that trouble you, child.

GUNLÖD. Then I'm afraid he will fare badly with the Christians.

VALGERD. You fear that?

GUNLÖD. Some one is out there.

STRINDBERG

VALGERD [*Anxiously*]. Did you see the ship lying in the inlet this morning?

GUNLÖD. With heart-felt gladness!

VALGERD. Bore it the figure-head of Thorfinn?

GUNLÖD. That I could not make out.

VALGERD. Have a care, girl.

GUNLÖD. Is it tonight that I may go out?

VALGERD. Tomorrow—that you know well.

GUNLÖD. Mother!

VALGERD [*Going*]. Mind the fire.

[*Valgerd goes.*]

[*Gunlöd looks after her mother, then cautiously takes from her breast a crucifix, puts it on the high bench and falls on her knees.*]

GUNLÖD. Christ, Christ, forgive me the lie I told. [*Springs up noticing the images of the gods on the high bench.*] No, I cannot pray before these wicked images. [*She looks for another place.*] Holy St. Olaf, holy—oh, I can't remember how the bishop named her! God! God! Cast me not into purgatory for this sin! I will repeat the whole long prayer of the monks—credo, credo—in patrem—oh, I have forgotten that too. I shall give five tall candles for the altar of the mother of God the next time I go to the chapel—Credo, in patrem omnipotentem—

[*Kissing the crucifix eagerly.*]

[*A song is heard outside the hut accompanied by a lyre.*]

A crusader went out to the Holy Land,
O, Christ, take the maiden's soul in hand,

And to your kingdom bring her!
I'll return, mayhap, when the spruce trees
bloom.

Summers three he wanders far from thee,
Where nightingales sing their delight,
And masses he holds both day and night,
At the holy sepulchre's chapel.
I'll return, mayhap, when the spruce trees
bloom.

When the palm trees bud on Jordan's strand,
Then makes he a prayer to God,
That he may return to his native land,
And press to his heart his love.
I'll return, my love, when the spruce trees
bloom.

GUNLÖD [*At beginning of song springs up and then listens with more and more agitation and eagerness. When the song is over she goes toward door to bolt it, but so slowly that Gunnar is able to enter before she slips the bolt. Gunnar is clad in the costume of a crusader with a lyre swung across his shoulder.*]

GUNNAR. Gunlöd! [*They embrace. Gunlöd pulls away and goes toward door.*] You are afraid of me? What is it, Gunlöd?

GUNLÖD. You never took me in your arms before!

GUNNAR. We were children then!

GUNLÖD. You are right—we were children then.
What means that silver falcon on your

shield? I saw it on your ship's bow this morning, too.

GUNNAR. You saw my ship—you knew my song, and you would have barred the door against me! What am I to understand, Gunlöd?

GUNLÖD. Oh, ask me nothing! I am so unquiet of spirit—but sit and let me talk to you.

GUNNAR [*Sits*]. You are silent.

GUNLÖD. You are silent, too.

GUNNAR [*Pulls her to his side*]. Gunlöd, Gunlöd—has the snow fallen so heavily that memories have been chilled—even the mountains here burst forth with fire—and you are cold as a snow wind—but speak—speak! Why are you here in Iceland—and what has happened?

GUNLÖD. Terrible things—and more may follow if you stay here longer.—[*Springs up*]. Go, before my father comes.

GUNNAR. Do you think I would leave you now—I, who have sought you for long years? When I could not find you in the home land I went to the wars against the Saracens to seek you the other side of the grave. But my time had not yet come; when the fourth spring came, I heard through wandering merchants that you were to be found here. Now I have found you—and you wish me to leave you in this heathen darkness.

GUNLÖD. I am not alone!

GUNNAR. Your father does not love you—your mother does not understand you, and they are both heathen.

GUNLÖD. I have friends among the Christians.

GUNNAR. Then you have become a Christian, Gunlöd!—the holy virgin has heard my prayer.

GUNLÖD. Yes, yes! Oh, let me kiss the cross you bear on your shoulder—that you got at the holy sepulchre!

GUNNAR. Now I give you a brother Christian's kiss—the first, Gunlöd, you have from me.

GUNLÖD. You must never kiss me again.

GUNNAR. But tell me, how did you become a Christian?

GUNLÖD. First I believed in my father—he was so strong; then I believed in my mother—she was so good; last I believed in you—you were so strong and good—and so beautiful; and when you went away—I stood alone—myself I could never believe in—I was so weak; then I thought of your God, whom you so often begged me to love—and I prayed to Him.

GUNNAR. And the old gods ——

GUNLÖD. I have never been able to believe in them—although my father commanded me to do so—they are wicked.

GUNNAR. Who has taught you to pray? Who gave you the crucifix?

GUNLÖD. The bishop.

GUNNAR. And that no one knows?

GUNLÖD. No—I have had to lie to my mother and that troubles me.

GUNNAR. And your father hid you here so that the Christians should not get you?

GUNLÖD. Yes—and now he is expected home from Norway with followers as he is to be Erl of the island.

GUNNAR. God forbid!

GUNLÖD. Yes—yes—but you must not delay. He is expected home tonight.

GUNNAR. Good—there beyond Hjärleif's headland lies my ship.—Out to sea! There is a land wind, and before the first cock's crow we shall be beyond pursuit.

GUNLÖD. Yes! Yes!

GUNNAR. Soon we should be at Östergötland—where the summer is still green—and there you shall live in my castle which I have built where your father's house stood.

GUNLÖD. Does not that still stand?

GUNNAR. No—it was burned.

GUNLÖD. By the Christians?

GUNNAR. You are so passionate, Gunlöd!

GUNLÖD. I suffer to say I would rather be a heathen.

GUNNAR. What are you saying, girl!

GUNLÖD [*After a pause*]. Forgive me, forgive me—I am in such a wild mood—and when I see the Christians, who should be examples, commit such deeds——

GUNNAR. Crush out that thought, Gunlöd—it is ungodly. Do you see this wreath?

GUNLÖD. Where did you gather it?

GUNNAR. You recognize the flowers, Gunlöd?

GUNLÖD. They grew in my father's garden—
may I keep them?

GUNNAR. Gladly—but why do you care to have
them when we are going to journey there
ourselves?

GUNLÖD. I shall look at them the long winter
through—the hemlock shall remind me of the
green woods and the anemones of the blue
sky.

GUNNAR. And when they are withered——

GUNLÖD. Of that I do not think.

GUNNAR. Then go with me from this drear land
—far away, and there where our childhood
was spent we will live as free as the birds
among the flowers and sunshine. There you
shall not go in stealth to the temple of the
Lord when the bells tell you of the Sabbath.
Oh, you shall see the new chapel with its
vaulted roof and high-pillared aisles. And
hear the acolytes singing when the bishop
lights the incense on the high altar. There
shall you solemnize the God service with those
of Christ and you shall feel your heart
cleansed of sin.

GUNLÖD. Shall I fly—leave my mother?

GUNNAR. She will forgive you some time.

GUNLÖD. But my father would call me cowardly
and that I would never allow.

GUNNAR. That you must endure for the sake of
your belief.

GUNLÖD. Thorfinn's daughter was never cowardly.

GUNNAR. Your father does not love you, and he will hate you when he knows of your conversion.

GUNLÖD. That he may do—but he shall never despise me.

GUNNAR. You surrender your love, Gunlöd.

GUNLÖD. Love!—I remember—there was a maiden—she had a friend who went away—after, she was never again glad—she only sat sewing silk and gold—what she was making no one knew—and when they asked her she would only weep. And when they asked her why she wept, she never answered—only wept. She grew pale of cheek and her mother made ready her shroud.—Then there came an old woman and she said it was love. Gunnar,—I never wept when you went away ■■ father says it is weak to shed tears; I never sewed silk and gold for that my mother has never taught me to do—then had I not love?

GUNNAR. You have often thought of me during these years?

GUNLÖD. I have dreamed so often of you, and this morning when I stood by the window where I linger so willingly and, gazing over the sea, I saw your ship come up out of the east, I became unquiet although I did not know it was your ship.

GUNNAR. Why do you gaze so willingly over the sea?

GUNLÖD. You ask many questions!

GUNNAR. Why did you want to close the door against me?

GUNLÖD [*Silent*].

GUNNAR. Why didn't you close it?

GUNLÖD [*Silent*].

GUNNAR. Why are you silent?

[*Gunlöd bursts into tears.*]

GUNNAR. You weep, Gunlöd, and you know why? I know,—you love!

[*Takes her in his arms and kisses her.*]

GUNLÖD. [*Tearing herself away*]. You must not kiss me! Go!

GUNNAR. Yes—and you shall go with me.

GUNLÖD. I do not care to be commanded by you—and I shall not obey.

GUNNAR. The volcano gives forth fire—and burns itself out!

GUNLÖD. You have destroyed my peace—forever! Go and let me forget you.

GUNNAR. Do you know what the silver falcon with the ribbon stands for? It is the symbol of the wild girl I shall tame.

GUNLÖD [*With force*]. You! Go before I hate you!—No one yet has bent my will!

GUNNAR. The wild fire of the viking's blood still burns in your veins, but it shall be quenched. A day and a night shall I wait for you. And you will come—mild as a dove seeking shelter, although you now would fly above the clouds

like a wild falcon. But I still hold the ribbon in my hand—that is your love, which you cannot tear away. When twilight falls again you will come. Till then, farewell.

[*Goes to the door and stops.*]

GUNLÖD. [*Silent.*]

GUNNAR. [*Going.*] Farewell.

GUNLÖD. We shall see, proud knight, who comes first. When this garland shall bloom again, then shall I come. [*Throws garland in fire. She watches it burn in a thoughtful mood. When it is quite burnt she breaks into tears again and falls on her knees.*] God! God! Soften my proud spirit! Oh, that he should leave me! [*Hastens to door. At same moment Valgerd enters, passes Gunlöd, and goes to fire.*]

VALGERD. Why did you not tend the fire?

GUNLÖD. [*Silent.*]

VALGERD [*Putting her hand against Gunlöd's heart*]. You have a secret!

GUNLÖD. Yes, mother, yes.

VALGERD. Hide it well.

GUNLÖD. Oh, I must speak—I can't bear it any longer.

VALGERD. When saw you a mother who did not know a daughter's secrets?

GUNLÖD. Who told you mine?

VALGERD [*Harshly*]. Dry your tears.

[*A pause.*]

GUNLÖD. Oh, let me go out—on the mountains—on the strand. It is so stifling here.

VALGERD. Go up to the loft—and you can be alone. [*Enter a thrall.*] What would you?

THRALL. The Erl's trumpets are heard beyond the rocks and the storm is growing.

VALGERD. Has darkness fallen?

THRALL. Yes, and ■ terrible darkness it is.

[*A pause.*]

GUNLÖD. Send out a boat—two—as many ■■ can be found.

THRALL. All the boats are out for the hunt.

GUNLÖD. Light beacon fires.

THRALL. All the fuel is so rain-soaked that we haven't had so much as ■ twig on the hearth all the evening.

VALGERD. Away!

THRALL. How will it go with the Erl?

VALGERD. Does that concern you?

[*Thrall goes.*]

GUNLÖD. You have not forgotten your wrong!

VALGERD. Nor my revenge! One should not lay hands on the daughter of an Erl!

GUNLÖD. So be it. Now your moment has come—take your revenge—I'll show you how—like this. [*Takes a lighted torch.*] Put this torch in the window-hole on the right and you wreck him. Put it in the left and you save him ——

VALGERD [*Interrupts*]. Give me the torch and leave me.

GUNLÖD. There is a sacrifice which can pacify your gods. Sacrifice your revenge.

VALGERD. [*Takes torch, hesitates, and goes quickly to left window-hole and places it there. Trumpets are heard*]. You struck me, Thorfinn—I swore revenge—I shall humble you with a kind deed.

GUNLÖD [*Unseen by Valgerd has entered and falls on her mother's neck*]. Thanks, mother.

VALGERD [*Disconcerted*]. Haven't you gone—

GUNLÖD. Now I shall go.

[*Gunlöd goes.*]

VALGERD [*Alone by the window-hole*]. You shout for help, you mighty man, who always helped yourself. [*Trumpets are heard.*] Where is now your might—where is your kingdom— [*A gust of wind blows out the lighted torch. Valgerd, terribly frightened, takes torch and lights it.*] Oh, he will perish! What shall I do? Pray? To whom? Odin? Njard? Ögir? I have called to them for four times ten years, but never have they answered. I have sacrificed, but never have they helped. Thou, God, however you may be called—Thou mighty one, who bids the sun to rise and set, thou tremendous one who rules over the winds and water—to you will I pray, to you will I sacrifice my revenge if you will save him.

[*Orm enters unnoticed.*]

ORM. Good evening to you, Valgerd. Put on your cloak—the wind is sharp.

VALGERD [*Disconcerted, takes down torch and closes window-hole.*] Welcome, Orm.

ORM. Thanks.

VALGERD. How is it with you, Orm?

ORM. Tolerable enough—when one gets near the big logs.

VALGERD [*Irritated*]. How went the journey I mean?

ORM. That is a long saga.

VALGERD. Make it short.

ORM. Well, as you know, we fared to Norway, seeking men and timber.

VALGERD. Orm!

ORM. Valgerd!

VALGERD. You have not spoken a word of the Erl.

ORM. Have you asked a word about your mate?

VALGERD. Where is he? Lives he?

ORM. I know not.

VALGERD. You know not!—you, his foster brother? Where did you part from him?

ORM. Far out in the gulf. It was merry out there you may believe. You should have seen him swimming with my lyre in his hand. The sea-weed was so tangled in his beard and hair that one was tempted to believe that it was Neptune himself. Just then came a wave as big as a house ——

VALGERD. And then?

ORM. And then—I saw my lyre no more.

VALGERD. Orm! You jest while your lord and brother is perhaps perishing out there! I command you—go at once and seek him! Do you hear?

ORM. Why, what is the matter? You were never before concerned about your mate! You might find time to give me a drink of ale before I go.

VALGERD. Warm your knees by the hearth. I shall go—and defy wind and storm.

ORM [*Taking her hands*]. Woman, woman—after all, you are a woman!

VALGERD [*Angry*]. Let go my hand.

ORM. Now the Erl is saved!

VALGERD. Saved?

ORM. Yes, you have been given back to him—and that is his voice now.

[*Goes.*]

[*Voices of Thorfinn and Orm are heard outside, Thorfinn laughing loudly.*]

VALGERD. The Erl comes—he laughs—that I have never heard before—oh, there is something terrible approaching!

[*Wrings her hands.*]

[*Enter Thorfinn and Orm.*]

THORFINN [*Laughing*]. That was a murderous sight ——

ORM. Yes, I promise you!

VALGERD. Welcome home, mate.

THORFINN. Thanks, wife. Have you been out in the rain? Your eyes are wet.

VALGERD. You are so merry!

THORFINN. Merry? Yes—yes.

VALGERD. What became of your ships?

ORM. They went to the bottom—all but one.

VALGERD [*To Thorfinn*]. And you can nevertheless be so gay?

THORFINN. Ho! Ho! Timber grows in plenty in the north!

ORM. Now perhaps we might have something life-giving.

THORFINN. Well said! Fetch some ale, wife, and let's be merry.

ORM. And we'll thank the gods who saved us.

THORFINN. When will you ever outgrow those sagas, Orm?

ORM. Why do you force your wife and daughter to believe in them?

THORFINN. Women folk should have gods.

ORM. Whom do you believe helped you out there in the storm?

THORFINN. I helped myself.

ORM. And yet you cried out to Åke-Thor when the big wave swallowed you.

THORFINN. There you lie.

ORM. Orm never lies.

THORFINN. Orm is a poet!

ORM. Thorfinn must have swallowed too much sea water when he cried for help to have such a bitter tongue.

THORFINN. Take care of your own tongue, Orm.

[*Valgerd with drinking horns.*]

VALGERD. Here, foster-brothers, I drink to your oath of friendship and better luck for your next voyage.

THORFINN. I forbid you to speak of that again.

[*They drink. Thorfinn takes horn hastily from mouth and asks*] Where is the child?

VALGERD [*Troubled*]. She is in the loft.

THORFINN. Call her hither.

VALGERD. She's not well.

THORFINN [*Looks sharply at Valgerd*]. She shall—come!

VALGERD. You don't mean that.

THORFINN. Did you hear the word?

VALGERD. It is not your last.

THORFINN. A man has but one, though woman must always have the last.

VALGERD [*Weakly*]. You mock me.

THORFINN. You are angry I believe.

VALGERD. You laugh so much tonight.

[*Goes out.*]

THORFINN. Orm! A thought comes to me.

ORM. If it's a great one you had better hide it.

Great thoughts are scarce these days.

THORFINN. Did you notice my wife?

ORM. I never notice other men's wives.

THORFINN. How kindly and mild she was.

ORM. She pitied you.

THORFINN. Pitied me?

ORM. Yes, because sorrow that laughs is the laughter of death, she thought.

THORFINN. Woman cannot think.

ORM. No, not with her head, but with her heart.

That's why she has a smaller head but a bigger breast than we.

THORFINN. Forebodings of evil torture me.

ORM. Poor Thorfinn.

THORFINN. My child! Orm! When she comes do you bid her drink from the horn to Åsa-Odin.

ORM. The fox scents against the wind. I understand.

THORFINN. Be ready—they come.

ORM. Be not hard with the child, Thorfinn, or you will have me to reckon with.

[Valgerd and Gunlöd enter. The latter heavy with sleepiness.]

GUNLÖD. Welcome home, father.

THORFINN. Do you speak truthfully?

GUNLÖD. *[Silent.]*

THORFINN. You are ill, are you not?

GUNLÖD. I am not quite myself.

THORFINN. I fear so.

ORM *[Waving a drinking horn over the fire].*

Come, Gunlöd, and empty this sacred horn to Odin who saved your father from shipwreck.

[All empty their horns except Gunlöd.]

THORFINN *[Tremblingly]*. Drink, Gunlöd.

[Gunlöd throws the horn on floor and goes to Thorfinn and buries her head in his lap.]

GUNLÖD. Hear me, father. I am a Christian.

Do with me what you will—my soul you cannot destroy. God and the Saints will protect it.

[Thorfinn is beside himself with grief and rage. Rises and pushes Gunlöd away from him and tries to speak, but words fail him.]

Sits on his high bench again in silence. Orm goes to the women and speaks quietly to them. They go toward door. Suddenly Gunlöd turns.]

GUNLÖD. No! I won't go. I must speak that you, my father, may not go to the grave with a lie—for your whole life has been a lie! I shall sacrifice the child's respect—love I have never felt—and prove to you what terrible guilt you have gathered on your head. Know then, you have taught me to hate—for when did you ever give me love—you taught me to fear the great Erl Thorfinn and you have succeeded, because I tremble before your harshness. I respect your many scars and great deeds, but you never taught me to love my father. You always thrust me away when I wanted to come to you—you poisoned my soul and now you see God's punishment. You have made me a criminal—for such I am at this moment, but it cannot be otherwise. Why do you hate my belief? Because it is love and yours is hate! Oh, father, father, I want to kiss the clouds from your brow. I wanted to caress your white locks and make you forget the sorrows that whitened them. I wanted to support you when your steps began to falter—Oh! forget what I have said—open your arms [*falls on her knees*] and take me to your heart. Look at me tenderly—just once before it is too late. Speak one word— [*springs to her feet*] Oh, your

glance freezes me! You will not! I shall pray for power to love you.

[*Bursts into tears and goes out, followed by Valgerd, Orm goes forward to Thorfinn.*]

THORFINN. Sing for me, Orm.

ORM. Orm sings nothing but lies.

THORFINN. Lie then.

ORM. Was the truth so bitter?

THORFINN. What do you say?

ORM. Never mind. You shall hear more from me later.

THORFINN. Orm, you are my friend!

ORM. H'm—of course!

THORFINN. I lack peace.

ORM. There are two ways to gain peace: one is never to do anything one regrets—the other never to regret anything one does!

THORFINN. But if one has already done what one regrets?

ORM. Thorfinn! That is to say, you regret your harshness toward your child?

THORFINN [*Angry*]. I regret nothing. And as far as the child is concerned you had better hold your tongue!

ORM. Hear you, Thorfinn—have you ever thought about what your life has been?

THORFINN. Thinking is for old women—doing has been my life.

ORM. What do you intend to do now?

THORFINN. What do I intend to do now?

ORM. Yes.

THORFINN [*Shaken, is silent.*]

ORM. You ■■■ how even a little thought struck you—think then if ■ big thought should come. Why don't you dare to look back? Because you are afraid of the sights you would see.

THORFINN. Let the past remain buried.

ORM. No, I shall tear the corpses from their graves and they shall stare at you with their empty orbits until you quake with anguish and fear—and you shall see that with all your strength you were not ■ man.

THORFINN. What are you saying, madman?

ORM. Yes, shout—you are still a boy. Yes, you—I have seen big, tall children with bushy beards and gray hairs and crooked backs ■ well.

THORFINN. Hold your tongue, Orm.

ORM. Shout until the hut trembles—the truth you cannot shout down.

THORFINN. Silence, before I strike you!

ORM. Strike! Strike me to death—tear the tongue out of my mouth—with copper trumpets shall the truth be blasted into your ears, “Your life has been ■ lie.”

THORFINN [*With repressed anger and pain*]. Orm, I beg of you—speak no more.

ORM. Yes, Thorfinn, I shall speak. Feel how the earth trembles under you. That means an earthquake! The whole earth trembles these days, for she is about to give birth. She is to bring forth in dire pain a glorious hero. Open your eyes and look. Do you see

how the east ~~war~~ with the west? It is love's first conflict—the ~~new~~ bride trembles under the elder's embraces, she struggles and suffers—but soon she shall rejoice, and thousands of torches shall be lighted and radiate peace and gladness, because he shall be born, the young, the strong, the beautiful prince-ling, who shall rule over all peoples and whose sceptre is called love and whose crown is called light and whose name is the new age! Thorfinn! do you remember the saga about Thor at Utgärda Loke? He lifted the cat so high that the trolls turned pale; he drank so deep from the horn that the trolls trembled—but when the old woman felled him to his knees then the trolls laughed. It was the age that vanquished him, and it is the age that you have warred against, and which has slain you—it is the lord of the age, it is God who has crushed you.

THORFINN. I have never known any god but my own strength, and that god I believe in!

ORM. You don't know him—you who have so long been lying at feud with him. It was he who drove you from your native land, and you thought you were escaping him. It was he who struck your ships to splinters and swallowed up your treasures and ended your power. It was he who tore your child from you—and you said you lacked peace! It was he ——

[*Messenger enters.*]

MESSENGER. Are you the Erl Thorfinn.

THORFINN. I am.

MESSENGER. You committed the coast massacre at Reyd-fiord last spring?

THORFINN [*Undisturbed*]. I did.

MESSENGER. You plundered and burned Hallfred at Thorvalla?

THORFINN. Yes.

MESSENGER. And then you disappeared.

THORFINN [*Silent.*]

MESSENGER. The Allting has now declared you an outlaw and pronounced you a felon. Your house is to be burned to the ground, and whomsoever will may take your life. Your enemies are at hand, therefore fly while there is yet time—make your escape this night.

[*Messenger goes out and there is a long pause.*]

ORM. Do you know who that was?

THORFINN. You may well ask that.

ORM. It was a messenger from that old woman who felled Thor—the age!

THORFINN. You talk like an old woman.

ORM. This age does not want to use force, but you have violated it and it strikes you.

THORFINN. This age cannot suffer strength, therefore it worships weakness.

ORM. When you came to this island you swore peace. You have broken your oath, you have violated your honor, therefore you must die like a felon.

THORFINN. Do you too call me a felon?

ORM. Yes.

THORFINN. Would you dare to break an oath?
Would you dare to be called a felon?

ORM [*Silent.*]

THORFINN. Poor wretch! It is you who put shackles on me when I want to fly! Like a snake you coil yourself around my legs. Let go of me!

ORM. We have sworn the oath of foster-brothers.

THORFINN. I break it!

ORM. You cannot.

THORFINN. Then I'll kick you out of the way.

ORM. That will be our death.

THORFINN. Are you a man, Orm?

ORM. I've become a poet only.

THORFINN. Therefore you have become nothing.

ORM. I knew what I wanted, but I could not attain it. You could attain anything, but did not know what you wanted.

THORFINN. Thanks for your song. Farewell.

ORM. Who will sing your death song?

THORFINN. The ravens no doubt.

ORM. Do you dare to die, Thorfinn?

THORFINN. I dare more! I dare to be forgotten!

ORM. You were always stronger than I. Farewell. We'll meet again.

[*Orm goes out.*]

THORFINN. Alone! Alone! Alone! [*Pause.*] I remember one autumn when the equinoctial storm raged over England's sea my dragon ship was wrecked and I was tossed up on the

rocks alone. Afterward everything grew calm. Oh, what long days and nights! Only the cloudless sky above and endlessly the deep blue sea around me. Not a sound of any living creature! Not even the gulls to wake me with their screeching! Not even a breeze stirred the waves to lap against the stones. It seemed as if I myself were dead! Loudly I talked and shouted, but the sound of my voice frightened me, and thirst bound my tongue. Only the even beat of my heart in my breast told me that I was alive! But after a moment's listening I heard it no longer and, trembling, I rose to my feet, and so it was each time until, senseless, I swooned. When at last I revived I heard the slow beats of a heart beside me and a deep breathing that was not mine, and courage revived in my soul. I looked about—it was a seal seeking rest; it gazed at me with its moist eyes as if filled with compassion for me. Now I was no longer alone! I stretched out my hand to caress its rough body; then it fled and I was doubly alone. Again I am on the rocks! What do I fear? Yes, loneliness! What is loneliness? It is I, myself! Who am I then to fear myself? Am I not Erl Thorfinn, the strong, who has bowed thousands of wills to his? Who never asked for friendship or love but himself bore his own sorrows! No! No! I am another! And therefore Thorfinn the strong fears Thorfinn the weak! Who stole

my strength? Who struck me down? Was it the sea? Have I not vanquished the sea three times ten voyages? And it has defeated me but once—but then to the death! It was the stronger. It was a God. But who subdued the sea that lately raged? Who? Who? Who? It was the stronger! Who are you then, the stronger! Oh, answer, that I may believe!—He does not answer! — All is silent! — Again I hear my heart beating. Oh, help, help! I am cold, I freeze —

[*Goes to door and calls Valgerd.*]

[*Enter a thrall.*]

THRALL. You called, Master Erl?

THORFINN [*Recovering himself*]. You were mistaken.

THRALL. Yes, master.

THORFINN. How many men are we?

THRALL. Oh—half three score I think.

THORFINN. Are you afraid to die, thrall?

THRALL. How can I be when I believe that I shall be saved?

[*Crosses himself.*]

THORFINN. What does that mean?

THRALL. The bishop has taught us to do that.

THORFINN. I forgot that you are a Christian.

THRALL. Do you wish me to stay in your service when you are a heathen?

THORFINN. I want to prove how little I respect their belief. We must put double bolts on the north gate!

THRALL. Yes, Master, but the belief is stronger than a hundred bolts.

THORFINN. Who questioned you? [*Pause.*]
What happened when you became Christians here on the island?

THRALL. Oh, it was easier than any one would think. They only poured water on us and the bishop read from a big book and then they gave us each a white shirt.

THORFINN. Tell the twelve strongest to take their new axes—do you hear?

THRALL [*Starting to go*]. Yes, Master.

THORFINN. Wait. [*Pause.*] Do you remember what was written in that big book?

THRALL. I don't remember much of it, but there was something about two thieves who were hanged on crosses along with the Son of God. But one of them went to heaven.

THORFINN. Did they pour water on him, too?

THRALL. The bishop didn't say.

THORFINN. Do you know whether there are any horses in the stable?

THRALL. They must be out at pasture—but I'll see.

[*Starts to go.*]

THORFINN. You mustn't leave me — stay.

[*Pause.*] Could you die in peace this night?

THRALL. Yes, if I only had time for a prayer first.

THORFINN. Does that bring peace to one?

THRALL. Oh, yes, Master.

THORFINN [*Rises, takes up a goblet*]. This you shall have if you will pray for me.

THRALL. That's not enough.

THORFINN. You shall have ten, but if you ever tell of it—I'll take your life.

THRALL. It would not help even if you gave me a hundred. You must pray yourself.

THORFINN. I cannot, but I command you to pray.

THRALL. I will obey—but you will see that it does not help. [*Praying.*] Jesus Christ, have pity on this poor sinner who begs for mercy.

THORFINN. That's a lie. I never begged for anything!

THRALL. You see now that it doesn't help.

THORFINN. Give me my armor and help me buckle.

THRALL [*Helping*]. You are not keeping still. I can't fasten the buckles.

THORFINN. Wretch!

THRALL. But your whole body is shaking.

THORFINN. That's a lie!

[*Valgerd and Gunlöd enter.*]

THRALL. May I go now?

THORFINN. Go.

VALGERD [*Coming forward*]. You called me.

THORFINN. That's not true.

VALGERD. Your enemies are upon you.

THORFINN. What does that concern you?

VALGERD. Make ready. I have heard what has come to pass.

THORFINN. Then it is best that you [*indicating both Valgerd and Gunlöd*] hide yourselves in the cellar passage.

[*Another messenger enters.*]

MESSENGER. Erl Thorfinn, we are here. Will you surrender to our superior strength?

THORFINN [*Silent.*]

MESSENGER. You do not answer. Let the women go as we shall burn your home. [*Thorfinn is silent.*] Your answer!

[*Gunlöd who has been standing by the door, comes forward and takes a battle axe from wall.*]

GUNLÖD. I give you your answer! Ill must Erl Thorfinn have brought up his daughter and little would his wife have loved him if they should desert him now. Here is your answer.

[*Throws battle axe at messenger's feet.*]

MESSENGER. You are stronger than I thought, Thorfinn. For your daughter's sake you shall have a chance to fall like a hero and not as a felon. Make ready for open conflict—out on the field.

[*Goes out.*]

THORFINN [*to Valgerd*]. Out on you, cowardly, faithless woman, to guard my treasure so ill! To make my child mine enemy.

GUNLÖD. O, my father, am I your enemy?

THORFINN. You are a Christian; but it is not too late yet. Will you deny the white Christ?

GUNLÖD. Never! But I will follow you to death.

VALGERD. Thorfinn, you call me cowardly. I can suffer that, but faithless—there you wrong me. I have not loved you as warmly as the southern women are said to love, yet have I been faithful to you throughout life and I have sworn to go with you in death—as is the ancient custom. [*Opens a trap door in floor.*] Look, here have I prepared my grave, here would I die under these smoky beams that have witnessed my sorrows—and with those [*points to the carved images of Thor and Odin on uprights of high bench*] who guided us here. I want to go with the flames, and in the smoke shall my spirit rise to Ginde to receive charity and peace.

GUNLÖD. And I to be alone afterward! Oh, let me follow you.

VALGERD. No, child, you are young. You may yet flourish in a milder clime. But the old fir tree dies on its roots.

GUNLÖD. Father, father, you must not die. I will save you!

THORFINN. You?

GUNLÖD. Your kinsman Gunnar lies off Hjärleif's headland with his men. Send one of the thralls to him by a roundabout route and he will come.

THORFINN. So! It was out of that well that you drew your courage. Keep your help and go if you will.

GUNLÖD. You shall not think me a coward. I go with you, mother. You cannot hinder me.

[Thorfinn goes to the door, trying to conceal his emotion.]

VALGERD. No! Stay, Thorfinn, and for once bare your big soul that I may read its dim runics.

THORFINN. If you cannot interpret them now then may this runic stone crumble to air unread.

VALGERD. You are not the hard stone you would seem. You have feelings. Show them. Let them flow forth and you shall know peace!

THORFINN. My feelings are my heart's blood. Would you see it?

[The clatter of arms is heard outside which continues until Thorfinn returns. Thorfinn starts to go out when he hears the clatter.]

VALGERD. Oh, stay and say a word of farewell!

THORFINN. Woman, you tear down my strength with your feelings. Let me go! The play has begun!

VALGERD. Say farewell, at least.

THORFINN *[Restraining his feelings with effort]*. Farewell, child.

[Goes out.]

VALGERD. That man no one will bend.

GUNLÖD. God will!

VALGERD. His hardness is great.

GUNLÖD. God's mercy is greater!

VALGERD. Farewell, my child.

GUNLÖD. Do you dare leave me behind, alone?

VALGERD *[Embracing Gunlöd]*. Are you prepared?

GUNLÖD. The holy virgin prays for me.

VALGERD. I trust in the God of love.

GUNLÖD. And in the mother of God.

VALGERD. I know her not.

GUNLÖD. You must believe in her.

VALGERD. My belief is not your belief.

GUNLÖD [*Embracing Valgerd*]. Forgive me.

VALGERD. Now to your place.

[*Gunlöd opens the wooden shutter at window-hole and looks out. Valgerd takes a torch and places herself by the trap door in floor.*]

GUNLÖD. The strife is sharp.

VALGERD. Do you see the Erl?

GUNLÖD. He stands at the gate.

VALGERD. How fares he?

GUNLÖD. Everything falls before him.

VALGERD. Does he weary?

GUNLÖD. Still is he straight — — — See what terrible northern lights.

VALGERD. Have many fallen?

GUNLÖD. I cannot tell. They are drawing away from the threshing yard. Oh, the heavens are red as blood!

[*Pause.*]

VALGERD. Speak! What do you see?

GUNLÖD [*With joy*]. The silver falcon!

VALGERD. It's an ill-omen.

GUNLÖD. Father comes.

VALGERD. Is he wounded?

GUNLÖD. Oh, now he is falling!

VALGERD. Close the window-hole and trust in God.

GUNLÖD. No, not yet. A moment.

VALGRED. Are you afraid?

GUNLÖD [*Going toward door*]. No! No!

[*The sounds of the conflict gradually die away.*]

THORFINN [*Comes in pale and wounded.*] Stay!

[*Valgerd goes towards him. Pause.*]

THORFINN [*On high bench*]. Come here.

[*Valgerd and Gunlöd go to him. Thorfinn caresses Gunlöd's hair, kisses her forehead, then presses Valgerd's hand.*]

THORFINN [*Kissing Valgerd*]. Now you see my heart's blood.

[*Valgerd rises to get torch.*]

VALGERD. Now is our parting over.

THORFINN. Stay and live with your child.

VALGERD. My oath!

THORFINN. My whole life has been a broken oath and yet I hope — — — It is better to live — — —

[*Orm comes in wounded. Stops at door.*]

ORM. May I come?

THORFINN. Come.

ORM. Have you found peace now?

THORFINN [*Caressing the woman*]. Soon, soon!

ORM. Then we are ready for the journey.

THORFINN [*Looks at Valgerd and Gunlöd*].

Not yet.

ORM [*Sits on bench*]. Hurry if you want company.

THORFINN. Orm, are you a Christian?

ORM. You may ask indeed.

THORFINN. What are you then, riddle?

ORM. I was everything. I was nothing. I ~~was~~
a poet.

THORFINN. Do you believe in anything?

ORM. I've come to have a belief.

THORFINN. What gave it to you?

ORM. Doubt, misfortune, sorrow.

THORFINN [*To Valgerd*]. Valgerd, give me
your hand, so. Hold fast — tighter — you
must not let go until — the end.

[*Gunnar comes in and stops by door.*]

THORFINN. Who comes?

GUNNAR. You know me!

THORFINN. I know your voice, but my eyes see
you not.

GUNNAR. I am your kinsman, Gunnar.

THORFINN [*After a pause*]. Step forth.

[*Gunnar remains where he is, looking ques-
tioningly at Gunlöd.*]

THORFINN. Is he here?

[*Gunlöd rises, goes with slow steps and
bowed head to Gunnar. Takes his hand and
leads him to Thorfinn. They kneel.*]

THORFINN [*Putting hands on their heads*].

Eternal — — — Creating — — — God —
[*Dies.*]

CURTAIN.

THE STRONGER

CHARACTERS

MME. X., an actress, married

MLLE. Y., an actress, unmarried

A WAITRESS

THE STRONGER

SCENE—*The corner of a ladies' cafe. Two little iron tables, a red velvet sofa, several chairs. Enter Mme. X., dressed in winter clothes, carrying a Japanese basket on her arm.*

MLLE. Y. *sits with a half empty beer bottle before her, reading an illustrated paper, which she changes later for another.*

MME. X. Good afternoon, Amelie. You're sitting here alone on Christmas eve like a poor bachelor!

MLLE. Y. [*Looks up, nods, and resumes her reading.*]

MME. X. Do you know it really hurts me to see you like this, alone, in a cafe, and on Christmas eve, too. It makes me feel as I did one time when I saw a bridal party in a Paris restaurant, and the bride sat reading a comic paper, while the groom played billiards with the witnesses. Huh, thought I, with such a beginning, what will follow, and what will be the end? He played billiards on his wedding eve! [*Mlle. Y. starts to speak*]. And she read a comic paper, you mean? Well, they are not altogether the same thing.

[*A waitress enters, places a cup of chocolate before Mme. X. and goes out.*]

MME. X. You know what, Amelie! I believe you would have done better to have kept him! Do you remember, I was the first to say "Forgive him?" Do you remember that? You would be married now and have a home. Remember that Christmas when you went out to visit your fiance's parents in the country? How you gloried in the happiness of home life and really longed to quit the theatre forever? Yes, Amelie dear, home is the best of all, the theatre next and children—well, you don't understand that.

Mlle. Y. [*Looks up scornfully.*]

[*Mme. X. sips a few spoonfuls out of the cup, then opens her basket and shows Christmas presents.*]

MME. X. Now you shall see what I bought for my piggywigs. [*Takes up a doll.*] Look at this! This is for Lisa, ha! Do you see how she can roll her eyes and turn her head, eh? And here is Maja's popgun.

[*Loads it and shoots at Mlle. Y.*]

Mlle. Y. [*Makes a startled gesture.*]

MME. X. Did I frighten you? Do you think I would like to shoot you, eh? On my soul, if I don't think you did! If you wanted to shoot *me* it wouldn't be so surprising, because I stood in your way—and I know you can never forget that—although I was absolutely

innocent. You still believe I intrigued and got you out of the Stora theatre, but I didn't. I didn't do that, although you think so. Well, it doesn't make any difference what I say to you. You still believe I did it. [*Takes up a pair of embroidered slippers.*] And these are for my better half. I embroidered them myself—I can't bear tulips, but he wants tulips on everything.

Mlle. Y. [*Looks up ironically and curiously.*]

Mme. X. [*Putting a hand in each slipper.*] See what little feet Bob has! What? And you should see what a splendid stride he has! You've never seen him in slippers! [*Mlle. Y. laughs aloud.*] Look! [*She makes the slippers walk on the table. Mlle. Y. laughs loudly.*] And when he is grumpy he stamps like this with his foot. "What! damn those servants who can never learn to make coffee. Oh, now those creatures haven't trimmed the lamp wick properly!" And then there are draughts on the floor and his feet are cold. "Ugh, how cold it is; the stupid idiots can never keep the fire going."

[*She rubs the slippers together, one sole over the other.*]

Mlle. Y. [*Shrieks with laughter.*]

Mme. X. And then he comes home and has to hunt for his slippers which Marie has stuck under the chiffonier—oh, but it's sinful to sit here and make fun of one's husband this

way when he is kind and a good little man. You ought to have had such a husband, Amelie. What are you laughing at? What? What? And you see he's true to me. Yes, I'm sure of that, because he told me himself—what are you laughing at?—that when I was touring in Norway that that brazen Frédérique came and wanted to seduce him! Can you fancy anything so infamous? [*Pause.*] I'd have torn her eyes out if she had come to see him when I was at home. [*Pause.*] It was lucky that Bob told me about it himself and that it didn't reach me through gossip. [*Pause.*] But would you believe it, Frederique wasn't the only one! I don't know why, but the women are crazy about my husband. They must think he has influence about getting them theatrical engagements, because he is connected with the government. Perhaps you were after him yourself. I didn't use to trust you any too much. But now I know he never bothered his head about you, and you always seemed to have a grudge against him someway.

[Pause. They look at each other in a puzzled way.]

MME. X. Come and see us this evening, Amelie, and show us that you're not put out with us—not put out with me at any rate. I don't know, but I think it would be uncomfortable to have you for an enemy. Perhaps it's be-

cause I stood in your way [*rallentando*] or—I really—don't know why—in particular.

[*Pause. Mlle. Y. stares at Mme. X curiously.*]

MME. X [*Thoughtfully*]. Our acquaintance has been so queer. When I saw you for the first time I was afraid of you, so afraid that I didn't dare let you out of my sight; no matter when or where, I always found myself near you—I didn't dare have you for an enemy, so I became your friend. But there was always discord when you came to our house, because I saw that my husband couldn't endure you, and the whole thing seemed as awry to me as an ill-fitting gown—and I did all I could to make him friendly toward you, but with no success until you became engaged. Then came a violent friendship between you, so that it looked all at once as though you both dared show your real feelings only when you were secure—and then—how was it later? I didn't get jealous—strange to say! And I remember at the christening, when you acted as godmother, I made him kiss you—he did so, and you became so confused—as it were; I didn't notice it then—didn't think about it later, either—have never thought about it until—now! [*Rises suddenly.*] Why are you silent? You haven't said a word this whole time, but you have let me go on talking! You have sat there, and your eyes have reeled out of me all these thoughts which lay

STRINDBERG

like raw silk in its cocoon—thoughts—suspicious thoughts, perhaps. Let me see—why did you break your engagement? Why do you never come to our house any more? Why won't you come to see us tonight?

[*Mlle. Y. appears as if about to speak.*]

MME. x. Hush, you needn't speak—I understand it all! It was because—and because—and because! Yes, yes! Now all the accounts balance. That's it. Fie, I won't sit at the same table with you. [*Moves her things to another table.*] That's the reason I had to embroider tulips—which I hate—on his slippers, because you are fond of tulips; that's why [*Throws slippers on the floor*] we go to Lake Mälarn in the summer, because you don't like salt water; that's why my boy is named Eskil—because it's your father's name; that's why I wear your colors, read your authors, eat your favorite dishes, drink your drinks—chocolate, for instance; that's why—oh—my God—it's terrible, when I think about it; it's terrible. Everything, everything came from you to me, even your passions. Your soul crept into mine, like a worm into an apple, ate and ate, bored and bored, until nothing was left but the rind and a little black dust within. I wanted to get away from you, but I couldn't; you lay like a snake and charmed me with your black eyes; I felt that when I lifted my wings they only dragged me down; I lay in the water

with bound feet, and the stronger I strove to keep up the deeper I worked myself down, down, until I sank to the bottom, where you lay like ■ giant crab to clutch me in your claws—and there I am lying now.

I hate you, hate you, hate you! And you only sit there silent—silent and indifferent; indifferent whether it's new moon or waning moon, Christmas or New Year's, whether others are happy or unhappy; without power to hate or to love; as quiet as ■ stork by a rat hole—you couldn't scent your prey and capture it, but you could lie in wait for it! You sit here in your corner of the café—did you know it's called "The Rat Trap" for you?—and read the papers to see if misfortune hasn't befallen some one, to see if some one hasn't been given notice at the theatre, perhaps; you sit here and calculate about your next victim and reckon on your chances of recompense like ■ pilot in a shipwreck. Poor Amelie, I pity you, nevertheless, because I know you are unhappy, unhappy like one who has been wounded, and angry because you are wounded. I can't be angry with you, no matter how much I want to be—because you come out the weaker one. Yes, all that with Bob doesn't trouble me. What is that to me, after all? And what difference does it make whether I learned to drink chocolate from you or some one else.

[Sips a spoonful from her cup.]

Besides, chocolate is very healthful. And if you taught me how to dress—tant mieux!—that has only made me more attractive to my husband; so you lost and I won there. Well, judging by certain signs, I believe you have already lost him; and you certainly intended that I should leave him—do as you did with your fiancé and regret as you now regret; but, you see, I don't do that—we mustn't be too exacting. And why should I take only what no one else wants?

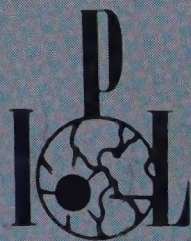
Perhaps, take it all in all, I am at this moment the stronger one. You received nothing from me, but you gave me much. And now I seem like a thief since you have awakened and find I possess what is your loss. How could it be otherwise when everything is worthless and sterile in your hands? You can never keep a man's love with your tulips and your passions—but I can keep it. You can't learn how to live from your authors, as I have learned. You have no little Eskil to cherish, even if your father's name was Eskil. And why are you always silent, silent, silent? I thought that was strength, but perhaps it is because you have nothing to say! Because you never think about anything!

[*Rises and picks up slippers.*]

Now I'm going home—and take the tulips with me—*your* tulips! You are unable to learn from another; you can't bend—therefore, you broke like a dry stalk. But I won't

break! Thank you, Amelie, for all your good lessons. Thanks for teaching my husband how to love. Now I'm going home to love him.

[*Goes.*]



Here are three of Strindberg's best short plays — ones frequently performed — in the translation by Edith and Warner Oland, generally considered the best.

Warner Oland is remembered by millions of movie fans as the famous Charlie Chan, but he was also a distinguished linguist and translator of Scandinavian literature.

Cover designed after a statue of Strindberg by Agnes Kjellberg-Frumeri.